WITHIN THE GATES

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS

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BY

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS

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This drama has so departed from the plan of the original story, "The Gates Between," published by me long ago, that it is, in fact, a new work, and has therefore received a new title. — E. S. P. W.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Doctor Esmerald Thorne, *a city physician.*

Helen Thorne, *his wife.*

Laddie, *their child.* (*Between four and five years of age.*)

Mrs. Fayth, *a patient of the Doctor's, and a friend of Mrs. Thorne's, an invalid.*

Doctor Gazell, *a hospital physician not in harmony with Dr. Thorne.*

Dr. Carver, *a young surgeon.*

Maggie, *a maid.*

A Priest, Nurses, Patients, Servants, People in the Street, Spirits, the Angel Azrael.

WITHIN THE GATES

ACT I., SCENE I

A library in a city house. A dining-room opens beyond a portière. The dinner-table is set. The library is furnished in red leather and dark wood. Books run to the ceiling. The carpet is indeterminate in tone. The heavy curtains are of a rich, dark crimson. A window is to be seen. The library is littered a little with the signs of feminine occupation. At one of the tables sits Mrs. Thorne. She is a young and beautiful woman, of stately presence and modest, high-bred manner. She is well-dressed — but not over-dressed — in a tea-gown such as a lady might wear in her own home when guests are not expected. The dress is cream-white; it falls open over a crimson skirt. The lamps are shaded with lace of red or of white. One with a white shade is on the table by which she sits. Her sewing materials are lying about, among books and magazines half-cut. She tries to sew upon a little boy's lace collar, but throws her work down restlessly. Her face wears a troubled expression.

(She rises and crosses the room nervously; goes to the window, and stands

between the long lace curtains, looking out. She consults her watch; speaks.)

MRS. THORNE. It is not so very late! Hardly past six o'clock yet. What can be the matter with me? I must not become a worrier. A doctor's wife can never afford to be that.

Enter MAGGIE.

MAGGIE. Shall I serve dinner, ma'am?

MRS. THORNE. The Doctor has not come, Maggie. We must wait — Jane will be careful not to burn the soup.

(*Rises and looks again restlessly out of the window; calls:*)

Maggie!

MAGGIE. Ma'am?

MRS. THORNE. When you went up to light the Doctor's candles, how did Laddie seem? Did Molly say?

MAGGIE. Just the same, she said. He does seem sort of miser'ble. [*Exit* MAGGIE.

MRS. THORNE (*takes up a magazine and tries, in vain, to read; sighs, and lays it*

down; takes up the little lace collar and tries to sew; lays that down; rises). I'll run up again and look at the child for myself.

Enter MAGGIE.

MAGGIE. Mrs. Fayth, ma'am.

Enter MRS. FAYTH (*pale, sweet-faced, delicate, with the languorous step of the half-cured invalid. She is in carriage dress, with a long, dove-colored opera cape — rich, but plain in design. She throws off the cape at once*).

[*Exit* MAGGIE.

MRS. THORNE (*warmly embracing her friend*). Why, Mary Fayth! *You?* At this time of night!

MRS. FAYTH. Yes. I — Mary Fayth — is n't it wonderful? I have n't been out after sundown before for six years. . . . Is the Doctor in?

MRS. THORNE. He has n't come yet. I am waiting for him. We never can tell.

MRS. FAYTH. Does n't the dinner get cold?

MRS. THORNE. The dinner is subject to chronic bronchitis and acute pneumonia.

MRS. FAYTH (*laughs merrily*). Acute pneu-mo-nia is good. . . . You were always clever.

MRS. THORNE. But I don't fret. A doctor's wife can never do that. . . . Give me your cape, dear. You 'll wait for him.

MRS. FAYTH. I did want to surprise him. He would be so pleased. My husband calls me Doctor Thorne's miracle. But never mind. I can't wait for him. I 'm on my way to the Hospital Fair. . . . Think of that! I 'm to be let stay till half-past eight o'clock. Fred is to meet me there, and we 're to dine at the café with the crowd and see the tableaux. . . . Think of it! — like common, vulgar, healthy people. Is n't it wonderful? To be half alive! I have been half dead so long! Kiss me, Helen.

MRS. THORNE (*anxiously*). I hope you won't pay for it to-morrow, dear. (*Kisses her affectionately.*)

MRS. FAYTH (*cheerily*). Oh, I expect to be flat to-morrow. But it 's worth it — to go somewhere with one's husband . . . after six years. I 'm going to the Fifteen Cent Museum next — when I get a little farther along — some big, noisy, healthy, shabby place. Fred has promised to take me. He dotes on the gorillas. . . . Well, I only ran in. The horses are getting cold. I must go. Give my love to the Doctor — Helen ! I 'm going to church when I get well. I want to hear the *Te Deum*. . . . It 's a good while since I did that. They won't let me. They put it off till the last. Fred said I must begin with the Hospital Fair and work up through the gorillas to re-li-gious dis-si-pa-tion. The Doctor says I 'm to get well in a sci-en-ti-fic manner ; on the Law of Ev-o-lution. Poor dear Doctor ! He does n't care about the *Te Deum*. — Helen, I wish your husband believed. He is so good — so kind. He ought to be a re-li-gious man.

MRS. THORNE (*sadly, with almost imperceptible bitterness*). He is a doctor.

MRS. FAYTH. He is so great, you see. He is almighty to so many miserable people. . . . I can understand that. His mind stops there. He is so strong, so powerful; he works the miracles himself.

MRS. THORNE. My husband has no time to study these questions, Mary. All his life is given up to science, you know. I thought — when we were first married — I could influence him in these ways. But a doctor's wife learns better than that.

MRS. FAYTH. What he needs is to be half-dead. Then he would *have* to believe. He is too much alive, poor Doctor. . . . It is such a joy to be alive, Helen! I thought I must run in and tell you.

MRS. THORNE (*smiling affectionately*). I'll tell him to be sure and see you to-morrow. You'll need it.

MRS. FAYTH. Well, Fred can tel-e-phone. I dare say I shall be sick enough. Good-by, dear — Helen? What ails *you?* You don't look right to-night.

MRS. THORNE (*arousing*). Laddie does n't seem well at all. I can't make Esmerald believe that anything ails him. But that 's the way, you know. . . . I am not allowed to be anxious. The mother of a doctor's child can never be that.

MRS. FAYTH (*with quick sympathy*). Oh, I am so sorry! I know just how you feel —

MRS. THORNE. You never had a child, Mary.

MRS. FAYTH. But sick people understand everything. Oh, we know!

MRS. THORNE. Yes. I suppose you have so much time to think.

MRS. FAYTH. We have so much time to feel. (*Rises to leave.*)

(MRS. THORNE *puts the opera cape over her friend's shoulders.*)

MRS. FAYTH (*abruptly*). Helen, I was thinking to-day about Cleo. I don't often.

MRS. THORNE (*pityingly*). Poor girl! I do, very often. She must have led a cruel life with her husband. And she was so

young when he died! She really hated him — I think as much after he was dead as when he was alive.

MRS. FAYTH. She did not hate yours.

MRS. THORNE (*gravely*). She was a patient. I have nothing to say.

MRS. FAYTH. But of course she hardly made a secret of it, that she loved the Doctor — half wrongly, half rightly.

MRS. THORNE. Like the woman she was — half fiend, half angel —

MRS. FAYTH (*interrupting*). There are people who still talk about her; they are equally divided whether she died of love or morphine. It is said she had the opium habit. It is three years ago to-day that she killed herself.

MRS. THORNE. I had forgotten. . . . Poor Cleo!

MRS. FAYTH. I 've been thinking about her all day — I don't know why. She never liked me very well — perhaps because I *did n't* love the Doctor; and so he could do

so much more for me. You know how those things go. . . . And you never gave her the satisfaction of one hour's jealousy?

MRS. THORNE (*peacefully*). How could I? I never had the materials. . . . But, as you say, these things are complicated. We never know where the end of the skein is.

MRS. FAYTH. I will send over to-morrow and see how Laddie is. Good-night — good-night.

MRS. THORNE (*kisses her warmly*). I wish you would stay — I wish you need not go. Don't go! Mary — *don't go!*

[*Exit* MRS. FAYTH (*slowly, with a sweet, mysterious smile*).

(MRS. THORNE *relapses into her anxious attitude and manner. Moves to the window, and looks out again, between the curtains. While she stands there with her back to the door, suddenly and noisily striding in,*)

Enter DR. THORNE.

DR. THORNE (*at once*). Is n't dinner ready?

MRS. THORNE (*turning delightedly*). Oh! At last!

DR. THORNE. Well. You might have met me, then.

MRS. THORNE. Why, I have been watching for you — and listening — till I 'm half blind and deaf. I have been to the window —

DR. THORNE. Don't complain. I hate a complaining woman.

MRS. THORNE (*has advanced towards him, and impulsively put up her arms! Drops them at this and turns sadly*). I did not know I was complaining, Esmerald.

DR. THORNE. Most people don't know when they are disagreeable. (*He does not offer to kiss her; pulls off his overcoat nervously.*) Is n't dinner ready? I am starved out.

(MAGGIE *is seen in the dining-room hastily serving dinner.*)

MRS. THORNE (*ringing*). Maggie had orders to put it on as soon as she heard your wheels. . . . Yes. There! You poor, hungry fellow!

Enter MAGGIE.

MAGGIE. Dinner is served, Mrs. Thorne.

DR. THORNE. I must run up and change my coat, first — no, I won't. I haven't time. I am driven to death. Come along, Helen. (*Strides out before her; then recalls himself from his discourtesy, and steps back.* DR. THORNE *is a tall, well-built, handsome man, of distinguished bearing, but with a slight limp; his face is disfigured by a frown, as he looks at his wife. He repeats*) I am driven to death! I haven't time to call my soul my own.

MRS. THORNE (*archly*). I thought you hadn't any soul, dear. Or I thought you thought you hadn't.

DR. THORNE (*crossly*). Soul? Rubbish! It is more than I can do to manage

bodies. Soul? Stuff! What have you got for dinner?

(*They seat themselves at the table.*)

MRS. THORNE. You poor boy! You poor, tired, hungry fellow! I hope the dinner will please you? (*Timidly.*)

DR. THORNE (*testily*). Really, I had n't time to come at all. I 've got to go again in ten minutes. But I supposed you would worry if I did n't show myself. It 's a foolish waste of time. I wish I had n't come.

MRS. THORNE (*speaking in a low, controlled, articulate voice*). You need not. On my account. *You need never come again.*

DR. THORNE (*irritably*). It is easier to come than to know you sit here making yourself miserable because I don't.

MRS. THORNE (*gently*). Have I ever fretted you about coming, Esmerald? I did not know it.

DR. THORNE. It would be easier if you did fret. I 'd rather you 'd say a thing than

look it. Any man would. . . . This soup is burned!

MRS. THORNE. Too bad! I gave special orders to Jane — that is really too bad. Let me send it away.

DR. THORNE (*excitedly*). No, I've got to get down something. Bring on the rest — if there is anything fit to eat. I'm due at the Hospital in twenty-two minutes. Gazell is behaving like the devil. If I'm not to handle him, nobody can. The whole staff is afraid of him — everybody but me. We sha'n't get the new ward built these two years if he carries the day to-night. I've got a consultation at Decker's. The old lady is dying. It's no use dragging a tired man out there; I can't do her any good. But they will have it. I'm at the beck and call of every whim. I wish I'd had time to change my boots! My feet are wet. My head aches horribly. I had an enormous office — sixty people; forty here — twenty down-town — besides my calls. I've seen

eighty sick people to-day. I was a fool to agree to that noon office hour. — I 've lost ten thousand dollars in this panic. Brake telephoned me to get down to Stock Street to save what I could. I could n't get off. . . . I lost a patient this morning — that little girl at the Harrohart's. She was a poor little scrofulous thing, but they are terribly cut up about it. — I wish you 'd had a good, clear soup. I hate these opaque things.

Mrs. Thorne. But last time we had consommé, you said —

Dr. Thorne. I said! I said! Who cares what he *says?*

Mrs. Thorne (*in a low voice*). That seems to be quite true.

Dr. Thorne. What did you say? Do speak louder. I hate to hear women mumble their words. — I hope you have some roast beef; better than the last. You must n't let Parsnip cheat you. Quail? There 's no nourishment in quail for a man

in my state — (*Pushes away his plate crossly.*) Well, I suppose I 've got to eat something. I was a fool not to dine at the club. — The gas leaks. Can't you have it attended to? Pudding? No. I see enough of spoon food in sick rooms. I might have eaten a good, hearty pie.

MRS. THORNE. But the last pie we had, you said —

DR. THORNE (*again*). I said! I said! What does it signify what a man *says?* How many times must I say that? Hurry up the coffee. I must swallow it, and go. I 've got more than ten men could do.

MRS. THORNE (*gently, but with perceptible dignity*). It seems to be more than one woman can do —

DR. THORNE. What 's that? Do speak so I can hear you. — If you 're going to speak at all.

MRS. THORNE. I said it seems to be more than one woman can do to rest you.

DR. THORNE (*carelessly*). Do ring for a decent cup of coffee. I can't drink this.

MRS. THORNE. Esmerald —

DR. THORNE (*crossly*). Oh, what? I can't stop to talk. There! I've burned my tongue now. If there's anything I can't stand, it's going to a consultation with a burned tongue.

MRS. THORNE (*tenderly*). How tired you are, Esmerald! It even gets into your poor foot. — You limp more to-night. I was only going to say that I am sorry. I can't *let* you go without saying that.

DR. THORNE (*rising, and walking irritably through the rooms*). I can't see that that helps it any. I am so tired I don't want to be touched. (*Mrs. Thorne brings his overcoat. He repulses her.*) Never mind my coat. I'll put it on myself. Tell Joe — No. I left the horse standing; I don't want Joe. I suppose Donna is uneasy by this time. She won't stand at night — *She's got to.* I'll get that whim out of her. — Now don't look that way! The horse is safe enough.

MRS. THORNE. I have n't bothered you about the horse, have I? But I don't feel — quite — easy. She is such a nervous creature, and so —

DR. THORNE (*imperiously*). Don't you suppose I know how to drive? You 're always having opinions of your own against mine. There! I must be off. — Where 's the boy, Helen? Where 's Laddie?

MRS. THORNE (*gently*). Laddie is n't just right, somehow, Esmerald. I hated to bother you, for you never think it 's anything. Molly is with him. I 've been a little troubled about him. He has cried all the afternoon.

DR. THORNE. He cries because you coddle him! It is all nonsense, Helen. Nothing ails the child. I won't encourage this sort of thing. I 'll see him when I come home. I can't possibly wait — I am driven to death — for every little whim. (*Rushes towards the door, but pauses, irresolute.*) I suppose I shall have to go up — if you 've

got this fixed idea in your head. I 'll take a look at him on the way out.

MRS. THORNE (*more gently; without reproach, but regarding him steadily*). Good-by, Esmerald.

DR. THORNE. Oh, bother! — I can't stop for fooling, now.

MRS. THORNE (*with sudden change of manner, breaks down, and hides her face in her arms. She weeps quietly*). He has always kissed me good-by — before — ever since we have been married. He never, never missed before!

Re-enter DR. THORNE. (*He holds the child in his arms, and strides in impetuously, still limping; lays* LADDIE, *wrapped in a silk robe, upon the sofa. Tries to make the child sit up; but the little fellow languidly falls back upon the pillows.*)

(MRS. THORNE *moves quickly over, and supports the child.*)

DR. THORNE. Helen, I must have an end

to this nonsense! Nothing ails Laddie. He is only a trifle feverish, with a little toothache — possibly there 's a slight cold. The child should be out of the nursery. He will sleep better for the change. Let him stay awhile — and don't make a fool of yourself over him. It really is very unpleasant to me that you make such a fuss every time he is ailing. If you had married a green grocer, it might have been pardonable. Pray remember that you have married a physician who understands his business, and do leave me to manage it. . . . There! (*Consults his watch.*) I 'm eight minutes behindhand already, all for this senseless anxiety of yours. It 's a pity you can't trust me, like other men's wives. I wish I had married a woman with a little wifely spirit . . . or else not married at all.

[*Exit* Dr. Thorne. (*He does not bid his wife good-by. At the threshold of the door he seems to hesitate, makes as if he would turn back, but goes out.*)

MRS. THORNE. Oh-h-h me! (*Utters one long, low cry; she does not speak any words. She releases her hold of* LADDIE, *who drops back sleepily upon the sofa pillow. She seems to forget the child. She stands still, in the middle of the library, with her face towards the window; her hands are crossed before her, and clenched tightly together. A solemn expression grows upon her face. Her tears dry upon her cheeks. Her eyes widen and darken. Her mouth quivers pitifully. Still she does not speak. She moves slowly to the window, and draws the curtains back. She stands there looking out; she shades her eyes with her hand. The hand trembles.*)

THE CHILD (*cries*). Mamma! Mamma!

MRS. THORNE (*does not respond to the child. She moans*). Esmerald! — Es — mer — ald!

END OF SCENE I.

SCENE II.

A dwelling street in the city, seen in an almost deserted condition. The time is early evening. The wreck of a buggy lies crushed against a curbstone; the traces are broken, the horse having released herself and disappeared. The wreck lies in shadow, and the prostrate form of a man is but dimly discerned. After a few moments of suspense and silence, slowly crawling to his feet,

Arises DR. THORNE. (*He is dressed for driving, as when he left home; his overcoat disarranged, muddy, and torn; his hat gone; his face has a singular pallor, and his whole appearance is agitated. As he rises, he throws a carriage robe back over the spot where he had been lying. He speaks.*)

DR. THORNE. That dastardly brute has done it, now! I'll sell Donna for this. — It will play the mischief with that old injury. I shall exchange an interesting limp for crutches, now. — Hil-loa! (*Walks to and fro with perfect ease.*) The shock has acted like a battery on the nerve centres.

Instead of a broken neck I have a cured leg. I 'm a lucky fellow — as usual. (*Laughs lightly; turns to examine the condition of the ruined buggy; suddenly looks confused, and puts his hand to his head.*) Curious cerebral symptoms I have ! Queer, there is n't a crowd round. They must have missed the trail when Donna bolted. She 'll be at the stable by this time. — She won't go home. Helen won't know. . . . I should n't like to be the man that had to tell Helen ! . . . I must get to her — I must get home as soon as I 've been to the Hospital. I 'm afraid I was a little short with Helen. I wish — (*Presses both hands to his temples as if to command himself; looks more and more bewildered.*) I must have been pretty well stunned — seems to me there was a collision. I ran down somebody. It was a landau — we crashed — I saw it overturn — there were people in it I knew — patients. . . . Who ? . . . *Who ?* (*Stamps the pavement peremptorily, and impatiently strikes his*

own head.) *Who* was it? — Horrible! The brain cells do not obey me — *me!* (*Walks about frenziedly.*) . . . Ach — ch! It is worse to remember than to forget. I have it now — the sweetest woman of them all — Helen's friend — the gentlest, the most obedient, most trustful, the bravest patient I ever had — Mrs. Fayth. I saw her face as the carriage went over. . . . She stretched out her hands, and said: "Doctor!" It was Mary Fayth. (*His face falls into his hands. For a moment he sinks down on the wreck of the buggy; but springs up.*) Now that accounts for it. — The crowd are all there. The accident was so bad nobody has thought of me. *She* is the victim. *I* have escaped. Dead or alive, she is done for. She never could recover from a shock like that. I must go and find her. I must find Mrs. Fayth. (*Starts and hurriedly walks down the street, peering everywhere.*)

[*Exit* Dr. Thorne.

(*In his absence no person passes the street.*)

Re-enter DR. THORNE.

Strange! How strange! I cannot find her. I cannot find anything — nor anybody that a man would naturally meet under such circumstances. Not a trace of the accident — yet I'm *as sure of it as I am that I'm alive.* (*Pronounces these words slowly, and paces the sidewalk, irresolute.*) It all came from my being overdue at the Hospital. I suppose I did drive Donna pretty fast. I wonder if I struck her? I am always in such an infernal hurry — I never have had time to live. *I am driven to death.* (*He says the last five words, not impatiently, but with a certain solemn deliberation.*) I must go at once to Mrs. Fayth's house. They must have carried Mary there — I wish I could spare time to see Helen! — I 'll go right home as soon as I 've been to Fayth's. Odd! How these brain symptoms last. I must have had quite a blow. I don't — I can't — it is mortifying to feel so confused. [*Exit* DR. THORNE.

(*In his absence the street remains deserted.*)

Re-enter DR. THORNE.

Enter behind him a tall Woman. (*She is wrapped in a long ash-colored veil, or mantle, beneath which shows a gleaming gown of flame-color. She follows* DR. THORNE *silently. She keeps at a distance from him. Her step is a gliding, stealthy one. The* Woman *does not speak.*)

DR. THORNE. There must be serious cerebral congestion. I cannot find the street. I cannot find Fayth's house. What part of this bewitched town am I in? I have lost my way — I, Esmerald Thorne, with a clientele of twenty years from end to end of the city — I cannot find my way.

Enter a Suburban, *a* Loafer, *and a* Priest. (*The* Woman *draws her veil, and looks solemnly at* DR. THORNE *as she passes. Her face is pale and*

wretched, but possesses singular beauty.)

[*Exit the* Woman.

(Dr. Thorne *does not notice the* Woman.)

(*The* Loafer *leans against a post. He stares stupidly at the wreck.*)

(*The* Priest *walks slowly, reciting an Ave.*)

(*The* Suburban *hurries on, making a wide circle to avoid the ruins of the carriage.*)

Dr. Thorne (*addressing the* Suburban). Can you tell me? — Here! Hold on a minute! Man, can't you answer a civil question? Will you tell me —

The Suburban (*pays no attention to* Dr. Thorne, *but hurries on. Consults his watch; speaks.*) I shall lose my train!

[*Exit* Suburban, *running.*

Dr. Thorne (*with puzzled impatience, addressing the* Loafer). Here! — You! Why, it's Jerry! Just tell me, will you, Jerry, where the accident was, and how much was the lady hurt?

(*The* Loafer *stares stupidly at* Dr. Thorne, *but makes no answer.*)

[*Exit* Loafer.

Dr. Thorne (*with trouble on his face, more gently addresses the* Priest, *whom he slightly touches on the arm*). Sir! — Oh, Father Sullivan! Look here, Father! I 'm ashamed to confess, I have lost my way. Would you direct me to the house of the well-known merchant, Frederick Fayth? I am due there on an urgent professional errand, and — I cannot explain the phenomenon — but I have lost my way!

(*The* Priest *repeats an Ave under his breath. He looks* Dr. Thorne *full in the face, but does not reply.*)

Dr. Thorne. And will you be so kind as to tell me whether you have heard of a carriage accident down-town — and how much was the lady hurt? Did you —

Priest (*looks blindly over* Dr. Thorne's *head; mutters*). Nay — Nay. I see nothing. (*He crosses himself*). Ave Sanc-

tissima! Ora pro nobis! (*He lifts his arms and, with a troubled and confused expression, makes the sign of the cross in the air over* Dr. Thorne. *Priest passes on.*)

Dr. Thorne (*gently*). Thank you, Father.

[*Exit* Priest.

Dr. Thorne (*stands sunken in thought for a few moments; suddenly starts and knots his hands together, then separates them with the motion of one blind or of one feeling his way in the dark*). I must see Helen! I must go to Helen! — Helen! *Helen!*

(*Sudden darkness settles. When it passes, the wreck of the buggy is removed.*)

Enter Dr. Thorne. (*Walks rapidly and perplexedly, still with the manner of a man who has lost his way.*)

[*Exit.*

Re-enter.

[*Exit.*

Re-enter (*speaks*).

I must get home. I *will* get home. I

will see Helen! (*Stops sharply, as if smitten by an unseen force; cannot take another step; contends, as if with an invisible power; droops, as if vanquished; turns, and retraces his way; his head hangs to his breast. He speaks.*) *What* thwarts me from my home? *Who* constrains me from my wife? (*Lifts his face angrily to the sky.*) Is this hypnotism? (*Laughs sarcastically.*) Am I an infant — or a maniac? It must be anæsthesia passing off. Perhaps I was etherized by some blank fool after that shock. — The accident! That is it, of course, of course! It is the cerebral concussion — a simple case. . . . I should n't like this to get out. I believe I 'll go into my office — if I can find my office — and wait till this passes off. It is a perfectly simple case. (*Walks feverishly up and down the street, searching for his own office; mutters.*) Ever since I yielded to that demand for a noon office hour downtown for business men — it has crowded me

without mercy. If they had n't been my old patients, I would n't have succumbed to it. It 's just another strand in the whip-lash that has driven me to death. Well (*draws a long breath*) — I seem to be out of sorts to-night. I shall get over all this nonsense when I see Helen. Helen will set me right. *Helen will make a live man of me again.*

End of Scene II.

SCENE III.

The interior of a down-town office. Dr. Thorne is seen in the consulting room; the door is closed into the reception room. One gas-jet burns over the desk; patient's chair and physician's chair are seen in the usual places; the desk is in order for the night; a movable telephone, of the kind in use in offices, stands upon the desk.

Dr. Thorne (*throws himself heavily into his revolving chair*). What the devil am I here for? (*Violently. The light grows dim as he says this.*) Why in —

why in the name of all the laws of Nature cannot I get home? (*After a pause, brokenly.*) Well — well! It 's something to be here; to get out of the street — in out of the night — it 's a good deal. I 'd begun to understand how outcasts feel — felons, apparitions, fugitives. In the name of the laws of mystery, thank Heaven for so much! (*The light brightens. It reveals his face, which is haggard and pinched. He pushes his case books about, aimlessly. Suddenly his hand hits the receiver of the telephone. He springs and cries out:*) The telephone! The telephone! I must have gone stark mad not to think of it. — See! I 'm not a drinking man, am I? (*Puts his hand to his head.*) No. I do not drink. Helen would not like to have me. — No. And I 've been all these hours without telephoning to Helen. She 'll think I did it on purpose — poor Helen — because of the words I said. *If a man could slay the words he says.* . . . They harry me — like ghosts.

(*Rings the telephone violently.*) Central? 48.4 — 48.4, I say. Why don't you give me 48.4? I tell you I 'm in a hurry. 48.4! And be quick with it! (*Rings again.*) Why in — why don't you attend to your business there? It is Dr. Thorne — Dr. Esmerald Thorne. My errand is most urgent. Give me my home, and make short work of it. 48.4! Do you hear? (*Rings again.*)

(A MAN'S VOICE FROM THE EXCHANGE *comes faintly over the wire, reverberating through the transmitter, so as to be audible at a distance from the instrument.*) Why don't you speak? We cannot make out a word you say.

DR. THORNE (*rings again, wildly*). I tell you I want my home — 48.4! I must speak to my wife. Give me 48.4 — Helen? Helen!

VOICE FROM THE TELEPHONE. Stop ringing your bell if you can't use your tongue. Put your mouth close to the transmitter. Are you drunk? Or are you dead?

DR. THORNE (*still ringing*). I will report you for this. It shall cost you your place. 48.4, I say. Give me my house. I will not submit to this. Give me 48.4!

(*The telephone ceases to reply.*)

DR. THORNE (*rises, hangs up the receiver, and paces the office tempestuously; speaks*). The very forces of Nature are in league against me. . . . My own nervous system — the night — the atmosphere — electricity — they are all gone foes to me. They are serried like an army between myself and her. Helen will be — Helen will suffer — oh, poor girl!

(*The telephone call bell rings suddenly.*)

DR. THORNE (*leaping to the receiver*). Who calls? I am here. Who wants Dr. Thorne? (*He snatches the receiver greedily to his ear; listens a moment; cries wildly:*) Oh, Helen! Is that you, dear? Speak louder, darling. . . . Yes, I'm here — at my office down-town. I'll be home soon. Don't be frightened — but I

met with a trifling accident. Helen? Helen! What 's the trouble? Don't you hear me, Helen?

WOMAN'S VOICE FROM THE TELEPHONE. Is my husband there? Esmerald! Are you there?

DR. THORNE. Why, Helen! Don't you hear me? What does ail this cursed telephone? Central! Give me a decent wire. My wife can't hear a word I say. . . . Helen? I 'm not at all hurt — only shaken up a little. I'll get back just as soon as — *Helen? Helen!*

WOMAN'S VOICE FROM THE TRANSMITTER. Central? I cannot find my husband at his office. Please give me the Hospital. — I must communicate with my husband.

(VOICE FROM THE TRANSMITTER *dies away.*)

DR. THORNE (*rings madly*). Central, you 've cut me off! You 've cut me off from my home. Give me 48.4 again. Helen? — Helen! Can't you hear me?

Don't you understand me, Helen? Oh, I could hear you — your own dear voice, my girl! I wanted to tell you — I can't wait till I see you to say — Helen? She does not hear me. — Helen!

(*The transmitter is silent.*)

(DR. THORNE *lays the receiver down. He hides his face in his hands.*)

END OF SCENE III.

SCENE IV.

Morning in a business street down-town. Many people are passing, among them the PRIEST, the SUBURBAN, and the LOAFER. A crowd thickens before the bulletin boards of "The Earth," a prominent daily newspaper. At the extreme left are the headquarters of "The Universe," a rival paper. Not far from "The Earth" building can be seen the modest sign of the eminent physician: —

DR. ESMERALD THORNE.
OFFICE HOUR 12–1 O'CLOCK.

(*A door opens within.* DR. THORNE *appears in the entrance to the corridor.*)

Enter DR. THORNE (*upon the sidewalk. Standing irresolute, he seems to wince from the daylight and the morning air; he mutters*).

Now it is light, I can find my way to Helen. (*Steps slowly along the sidewalk; shades his eyes from the sun. He wears no hat, and his pallor has increased. No person addresses him.*)

(*On the bulletin boards of* "The Earth" *can be seen the following announcement:*

WAR WITH THE ISLAND OF BORNEO.
BORNEO LAYS DOWN HER ULTIMATUM.
THE PRESIDENT HAS CALLED FOR VOLUNTEERS.
PANIC IN STOCK STREET.
SANTA MA FALLEN 30 POINTS SINCE YESTERDAY.
DISSENSION AT THE CITY HOSPITAL.
RUMORS OF ACCIDENT AT THE WEST END.)

Enter DR. GAZELL (*a short, blond, thick-set, suave man of middle age*) *and* DR. CARVER (*a very young man; the latter reading a fresh copy of* "The Universe").

DR. GAZELL (*with emotion*). Shocking!

Shocking! I cannot express — I am overcome!

DR. CARVER (*without emotion*). Yes. It is very sad. You 'll be apt to find these things in "The Universe" before "The Earth" gets them. I wonder if he —

DR. GAZELL. No. Never. He was above reproach. A hard man to get along with — willful, but above reproach. I am greatly shocked!

DR. THORNE (*stepping out into the crowd*). Ah, Gazell! Good-morning. I am — I am very glad to see you, Dr. Gazell (*pathetically*).

(DR. GAZELL *continues reading his paper. He does not look up.*)

DR. THORNE (*with embarrassment*). Gazell! (*He moves directly in front of the office of* "The Earth." *At that moment a new bulletin flashes in large letters, over the heads of the crowd, these words:* —

RUMOR CONFIRMED.
SHOCKING ACCIDENT!
TERRIBLE TRAGEDY.
RUNAWAY AT THE WEST END.
MRS. FREDERICK FAYTH DANGEROUSLY HURT.
THE EMINENT AND POPULAR PHYSICIAN,
DR. ESMERALD THORNE,
KILLED INSTANTLY.)

(DR. THORNE *reads, and reels; stares about him appealingly.*)

(*Murmurs are heard from the crowd.*)

Enter two Office Girls.

(FIRST OFFICE GIRL *starts, and points to the bulletin.*)

SECOND OFFICE GIRL. Oh! Oh! (*She bursts into tears.*)

SUBURBAN. Too bad! He was a clever fellow. He saved my little boy's life last summer.

LOAFER. He took a t'orn out av me eye onct and divil a cint did he charrge for 't.

PRIEST. Pater Noster in Cœlo — gone without absolution, poor soul! An attractive heretic — merciful to the poor of my parish.

DR. GAZELL. He drove too fast a horse. And he drove the horse too fast. I always told him so. But I am greatly agitated by this!

DR. CARVER (*reading aloud*). Now "The Universe" had it already in type: "Dr. Thorne was dragged for some distance before the horse broke free. He was found near the buggy, which was a wreck. The robe was over him, and his face was hidden. Life was extinct when he was discovered, which was not for an unaccountably long time. His watch had stopped at five minutes past seven o'clock. He was not immediately identified. By some unpardonable blunder the body of the distinguished and favorite physician was taken to the morgue."

DR. GAZELL. That accounts for it.

DR. CARVER (*reads on*). "It was not until nearly midnight that the mistake was discovered. A message was dispatched to the elegant residence of the popular doctor.

Mrs. Thorne is a young and beautiful woman, on whom, with their only child, an infant son, this blow falls with uncommon cruelty."

DR. THORNE (*utters a long, heartrending moan. But no person hears the sound. He stretches out his hands. The crowd shrinks from but does not see him. Staring at the bulletin, he stands apart. He raises his clenched right hand in the air; speaks*). It is a dastardly lie! It is one of those cursed canards manufactured to harass men — and — break the hearts of women. God! — She has seen it by this time. Let me pass! Let me go to her! You may kill *her* with this, but you can't kill me. Gentlemen, make way for me! *I am Dr. Thorne!*

(*The crowd pays no attention to this outcry.*)

Enter NEWSBOY (*shrilly piping*).

NEWSBOY. "Earth!" "Universe!" Latest — 8.30. All about the accident! Dr. Thorne killed instantly — Mrs. Fayth still breathin' — "Earth," sir? Two cents, sir.

(DR. THORNE *clutches the newsboy by the arm, and would tear the paper from him.* DR. THORNE'S *fingers grope over it — touch it. He tries several times to obtain it. The paper remains in the hands of the boy.*)

Enter BRAKE, *the broker.*

(DR. THORNE *staggers against* BRAKE, *who is reading* "The Universe.")

[*Exit the* Suburban, *consulting his watch.*

DR. THORNE (*more gently; addresses the loafer*). Jerry! Is that you, Jerry! Tell these gentlemen, will you, that I am Dr. Thorne? I should take it — kindly — of you, Jerry.

LOAFER (*stares; mutters*). Divil a cint did he charrge me for 't.

DR. THORNE (*addresses the broker*). Oh, Brake! I am glad to see you! I could n't get down to save my Santa Ma. But *that* is of no consequence. . . . I 've been hurt — an accident — and I am confused. I am suffering from hallucinations. They have

got beyond my control. I wonder if you would n't call a cab for me? I thought Dr. Gazell would take me home in his carriage, — but he did n't seem to hear me when I spoke to him. If you 'll call a cab, I 'll get home — to my wife.

[*Exeunt* Dr. Gazell, Dr. Carver, *and* Brake, *without replying.*

(Dr. Thorne *watches them with a piteous expression; stands back and apart from the crowd.*)

End of Act I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A small ward — the women's ward — in a hospital; several cots with patients in them are visible. One patient is in a wheeled chair. Screens stand by the cots. There are plants, pictures, the cheerful features of the modern hospital. Two nurses are seen busy with patients.

Enter DR. GAZELL *and* DR. CARVER.

DR. GAZELL (*seats himself by one of the patients; speaks blandly*). And how do we find ourselves to-day?

PATIENT (*turning her face, on which can be seen traces of tears*). Bad enough — worse. I've been so upset by —

DR. GAZELL. Yes, yes. I know. It is truly shocking!

DR. CARVER (*addressing one of the nurses*). You become your cap to-day. You

have an uncommonly good color — I mean to operate on No. 21.

NURSE. Do you really? We thought her improving. She 's nervous to-day — on account of Dr. Thorne.

DR. CARVER. Yes. Thorne had things all his own way here, as usual. I mean to operate, — if Dr. Gazell can manage her.

NURSE (*coquettishly*). You are so expert, — such an easy surgeon. You don't mind it more than a layman would carving a Christmas *goo* — oose. And what would you operate for — on No. 21?

DR. CARVER. Appendicitis, of course.

NURSE. Really? You are so clever on diagnosis. Now, I had n't thought of appendicitis — in her case. Do you know — I thought it more like pleurisy?

DR. CARVER (*looks keenly at the nurse to discover if she is making game of him; speaks pompously*). The nurse, as you have been taught in your training-school,

can *have* no opinions. Now, the physician —

NURSE (*demurely*). Oh, of course. I would n't have you think I 'm presuming to set up mine. She might have measles, or the grippe, for anything *I* should know.

DR. CARVER. Now you speak very properly indeed.

DR. GAZELL (*at bedside of No.* 21). Is the pain more severe on the right?

PATIENT. I did n't say I had any pain — now.

DR. GAZELL (*soothingly*). Increasing toward night? Paroxysms? Or is it steady?

PATIENT. I said I 'd got over the pain. That has all gone. It is the weakness — the deadly weakness.

DR. GAZELL. Just so. That weakness is a most significant symptom — I think you said it was accompanied by nausea?

PATIENT. No, I did n't. Not a bit.

DR. GAZELL. Just so. Dr. Carver? Here a moment? (*To the patient.*) I 'm

sure we can relieve all that. Just a little operation — a very pretty little operation — would set you right again in a week or two.

DR. CARVER (*coming to the cotside of No.* 21; *speaks eagerly*). It is such a beautiful operation! Why, I've known patients *beg* for it, — it is so beautiful.

PATIENT (*beginning to cry*). Dr. Thorne said there was no need of anything of the kind.

DR. GAZELL (*stiffening*). Dr. Thorne was an able man — but eccentric. His professional colleagues did not always agree with him.

Enter DR. THORNE. (*He has wasted since his last appearance; looks outcast, wan, and wretched; is splashed with mud; still hatless; stands at the lower end of the ward, gazing blindly about.*)

PATIENT No. 21. Dr. Thorne used to say that if we had better doctors, we should n't need so many surgeons. He said the true

treatment would prevent half the surgery in the city.

(DR. THORNE *starts, and moves towards the patient.*)

DR. GAZELL (*soothingly*). Yes. Just so. Dr. Thorne had great confidence in himself.

PATIENT (*rousing*). No more than his patients had in him.

DR. CARVER. Irritable! Very irritable! A significant symptom, Dr. Gazell. In my opinion, this extreme irritability *demands* an operation for appendicitis.

FIRST NURSE (*listening, laughs; addresses* SECOND NURSE). Now, if one could only apply that! Take a cross man, — any cross man, — say a brother, or a husband, or even a doctor, and if he carried it too far, just call on Dr. Carver. Why, it would revolutionize society. And he is so expert! He does n't mind it any more than carving a *goo* — oose. Yes, sir! I 'm coming. (*Demurely obedient; hurries to* DR. GAZELL.)

(SECOND NURSE *moves to the rear of the ward to a patient behind a screen.*)

(DR. THORNE *advances slowly; stands in the middle of the ward, unnoticed.*)

PATIENT NO. 21 (*louder*). I say, when a man 's dead is the time to speak for him. And I 'll stand up for my dear dead doctor as long as I live.

VOICE FROM ANOTHER COT. And so would I, — and longer, if I got the chance.

ANOTHER VOICE. He does n't need anybody to stand up for him. His deeds do follow him. And he rests from his labors.

(DR. THORNE *smiles bitterly; stands with his face towards the speaker. He knots his hands in front of him, and thus advances with a motion so slow as to be almost stealthy.*)

VOICE FROM ANOTHER COT. He would n't care so much for that. It 's Bible. He was not a religious man. But he was as *kind to me!* (*Weeps.*)

OTHER VOICES. And to me! Oh, yes, and to me, — as *kind!*

PATIENT IN THE WHEELED CHAIR. I

could n't move in my bed when I came here. I 'd been so three years. Look what he 's done for *me*. (*Sobs.*)

Dr. Thorne (*in a low tone*). Miss Jessie? Don't cry so. You 'll make yourself worse. Go back to bed, Jessie, and — see. I 'll tell you a secret. Don't tell the others just yet. I was n't killed, Jessie. That was a newspaper canard. *I 'm a live man yet.* See! Look up, Jessie. Look at me, — can't you? (*Pleads.*) Won't you, Jessie?

Patient in the wheeled chair (*stares past him at* Dr. Gazell *and* Dr. Carver). And to think of the likes of them, — in his place! What ever 'll become of this hospital without *him?*

Dr. Thorne (*with trembling lip*). You don't hear me, do you, Jessie? Well — well. I must have met with some cerebral shock affecting the organs of speech. It is a clear case of aphasia. I can't make myself understood. It — it 's hard. Jessie? (*Louder.*) I can't see things go wrong with

you, — no matter how it is with me. You've been in that chair long enough for to-day. (*Imperiously.*) Jessie, go back to bed! Stop crying about me, and go back to your bed.

(Jessie *wavers; shades her eyes with her hands; stares about her; slowly turns her wheeled chair and moves away.*)

[*Exit* Jessie.

Dr. Thorne (*moves more naturally and rapidly; stands by the cot of No.* 21; *speaks*). Good-morning, Mrs. True. I meant to have seen you last night. I was — unavoidably detained. I hope you're not worse this morning?

Patient (*with tears*). I've cried half the night.

Dr. Thorne. That's a pity. But you won't cry any more. I'll take care of you now.

Patient (*looks up wearily; turns her face on her pillow and sobs*).

Dr. Thorne. Clearly aphasia. She does not understand a word I say. Dr. Gazell! Gazell! Dr. Carver?

(*The two physicians murmur together.*)

DR. THORNE. Gazell? What's that? The knife? For Mrs. True? Excuse me, but I cannot permit it.

DR. CARVER. It would be such a pretty little operation. The students are getting restless for something. I told them —

DR. GAZELL. It is well-defined appendicitis.

DR. THORNE. Well-defined appendi — fiddlesticks! It is nothing but pleurisy. I tell you, Gazell, I will not have it!

DR. GAZELL (*looks around uncomfortably; speaks with hesitation*). Of course, Thorne would not have agreed with us.

DR. THORNE (*grips* DR. GAZELL *by the arm*). I tell you it would be butchery, Gazell! What are you thinking of? *Gazell!*

DR. GAZELL. But he was a very opinionated man, — everybody knew that.

(DR. THORNE *drops* DR. GAZELL'S *arm and walks away with a gesture of distress.*)

SECOND NURSE (*to* FIRST NURSE; *moves out from behind the screen*). Very invigorating day!

FIRST NURSE (*to* SECOND NURSE). Father Sullivan 's late with the Sacrament. I hope Norah, yonder, won't get ahead of him. She 's 'most gone. (*Approaching the cot of the patient behind the screen.*)

SECOND NURSE (*moves away*). Yes. She 's been unconscious half an hour.

Enter PRIEST. (*He advances to offer Extreme Unction to the dying patient.*)

FIRST NURSE. Lovely morning, Father.

DR. THORNE (*standing in the middle of the ward*). They used to call my name when I came in. "Oh, there 's the doctor!" "The doctor 's come!" It ran from cot to cot — like light. And everybody used to smile. Seems to me some of them blessed me. Now —

(*Sobs from the ward.*)

DR. THORNE (*tremulously*). My patients! Is n't there *one* of you who knows me?

Does n't *any*body hear me? Don't cry so! All the symptoms will be worse for it.

THE DYING PATIENT. Doctor? Doctor?

DR. THORNE. That sounds like Norah.

PRIEST (*recites behind the screen at* NORAH'S *bedside the prayer for the passing soul*). "Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo, in nomine Dei Patris omnipotentis, qui te creavit; in nomine Jesu Christi Filii Dei vivi, qui pro te passus est; in nomine Spiritus Sancti" —

DR. THORNE (*softly*). Thank you, Father. (*Stands silently with bowed head.*)

Reënter the patient in the wheeled chair.

JESSIE (*happily*). I 've had such a lovely dream! I thought Dr. Thorne was here — in this ward. Oh! (*With disappointment.*)

DR. THORNE. Jessie!

JESSIE (*sadly*). It was such a lovely dream! (*Droops and turns away.*)

(DR. THORNE *walks apart; stands drearily, with downcast eyes.*)

Enter MRS. FAYTH. (*She looks pale and*

agitated, but quite happy. She is dressed as before, for the street, but her head is bare; is wrapped from head to foot in her long, pale, dove-colored opera cape. She goes straight to DR. THORNE, *and touches him upon the arm; speaks softly.*)

MRS. FAYTH. Doctor?

DR. THORNE (*starts*). Oh! Mary Fayth! You? (*He grasps her hand with pathetic eagerness.*) Oh, I never was so glad! You are the first person — the only one — nobody else seemed to know me. I might have known *you* would. Where 's Helen? Is n't she with you? And you were n't hurt at all, were you? I have been — anxious about you. Those cowardly papers said — I tried to get right over and see you. And, after all, you 're not hurt. I thank — (*Looks around confusedly.*) Ah, what shall I thank?

PRIEST. Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

(DR. THORNE *listens with troubled interest, like a child learning a hard lesson.*)

MRS. FAYTH (*smiling*). I can only stay a minute. I must get back to my poor Fred.

DR. THORNE. Don't leave me.

MRS. FAYTH. Oh, poor doctor! Don't you *see?* The carriage overturned. I was badly hurt. I only died an hour ago.

DR. THORNE (*gasps, and stares at* MRS. FAYTH. *He tries to speak, but can only articulate*). You died an hour ago? And I? And *I?*

MRS. FAYTH (*still smiling, with her sweet, mysterious smile*). Don't take it so hard, doctor. I came to ex-plain it to you. Why, it 's the most beautiful thing in the world! (*Glides away slowly, but smiling to the last.*)

DR. THORNE (*throws up his arms in anguish*). I am dead! My God! *I am a dead man!*

(*His face falls into his hands, his whole body collapses slowly, he drops.*)

End of Scene I.

SCENE II.

It is night on a street in the West End of the city. At the right stands a church, dimly lighted for a choir to practice. An anthem on the organ can be heard. At the left appears Dr. Thorne's house, viewed from the outside. It has high stone steps, and lights are in the window. One window on the ground floor has the curtain raised. The interior of the library can be seen through the window, — glimpses of the books, the pictures, the table, the lamp with the white lace shade. The room is empty. Into it —

Enter Mrs. Thorne. (*She is dressed in deep black. Her face is drawn with grief. Her hands are clasped in front of her. She paces the room drearily. She is alone. She seats herself by the table; tries to read; lays the book down, and rises; paces the room.*)

[*Exit* Mrs. Thorne.

Enter DR. THORNE *at the far end of the street near the church.* (*He is dressed as before. He is still pale. His manner has increased in agitation, but a new resolution gives more firmness to his wasted countenance. He speaks, meditatively.*)

DR. THORNE. After all, there *is* another life. I really did not think it. (*Stops and passes his hand over his eyes; muses.*) God knows — if there is a God — how it is with me. If I have never done anything, or been anything, or felt anything that was fit to *last*, I have loved one woman, and her only — and thought high thoughts for her, and felt great emotions for her, and I could forget myself for her sake — and I would have had joy to suffer for her, and I 've been a better man for love of her. And I have loved her, — oh, I have so loved her that ten thousand deaths could not murder that living love! (*Falters.*) And I spoke to her — I said to her — like any low and

brutal fellow, any common wife-tormentor — I went from her dear presence to *this*. (*Brokenly.*) . . . And here there is neither speech nor language. Neither earth nor heaven, nor my love . . . nor my shame . . . can give my famished eyes the sight of her dear face, — nor my sealed lips the power to say, Forgive!

(*The organ can be heard from the church.*)

Dr. Thorne (*without noticing the anthem*). I will not bear it. No — no. I *will* not! I *will* go to her! (*Starts to rush up the street, whose familiar precincts he seems for the first time to recognize.*) Why, there is my own house! She can't be two rods away. I wonder if a dead man can get into his own home? *Helen?* (*His feet lag heavily; he moves like one who is wading in water. He makes the motions of one who withstands a strong blast or an invisible force. He is beaten back. Suddenly he raves.*) You are playing with me!

You torture a miserable man. Who and what are you? Show me what I have to fight, and let me wrestle for my liberty! Though I am a ghost, let me wrestle like a man! Let me to my wife! Give way and let me seek her! (*Slowly recedes, as if beaten back; bows his head. The man sobs.*)

CHOIR FROM THE CHURCH (*chant*).

> "God is a Spirit.
> God is a Spirit.
> And they that worship Him"—

(*Choir breaks off. The organ sounds on.*)

(DR. THORNE *seems to listen, but with a kind of anger. He slowly recedes, as if pushed back.*)

[*Exit* DR. THORNE.

Enter the Veiled Woman. (*She stands mutely and wretchedly. Watches the house. Wrings her hands, but makes no sound.*)

Enter MRS. THORNE. (*Within the house;*

can be seen plainly from the street through the window. She advances and draws the shade still higher; stands close to the window, pressing her hands against the sides of her eyes; looks out.)

(*The* Veiled Woman *shrinks at the sight of* Mrs. Thorne.)

[*Exit the* Woman.

Reënter Dr. Thorne *at the other end of the street.* (*He speaks shrewdly.*) It is nearer at this end. And perhaps, if I did n't have to get by that church — (*Hurries up opposite the house. Suddenly he sees her.*) Oh, there 's Helen! God! It is my wife. I — see — my — wife. (*Brokenly.*) Dear Helen! (*Pushes toward the house. At the foot of his own steps he falters and falls, still as if beaten back. He struggles as a man would struggle for his life. The veins stand out on his face and on his clinched hands. He cries out.*) I 'm coming, Helen! It is only I, my girl.

Don't be frightened, dear! I wonder would she be afraid of me? Perhaps it would shock her. Live people and dead people don't seem to understand each other. But I'll risk it. Helen would go alone and lie down alive in a grave at midnight, and never look over her shoulder — if she thought she could see *me*. I know Helen. I'll try again. (*He pushes and urges his way onward. But the invisible Power restrains him, as before. He stretches his arms towards the lighted window.*) Here I am, Helen! I can't get any farther, somehow. . . . Come and open the door for me, my girl, — the way you used to do. Won't you, Helen? With the boy in your arms? Perhaps if *you* opened the door, — I could get in. I . . . (*After a silence.*) I won't stay very long. I won't trouble you any, Helen. I know I don't belong there any more. I won't intrude. (*Wistfully.*) Helen! I was cruel to you. I have been ashamed of myself. I thought if I could get in long

enough to say — (*Reflects.*) Mary Fayth went back to see *Fred.* Nothing prevented *her* —

(MRS. THORNE *throws open the window. Leans out and looks about.*)

(MAGGIE *is seen moving about the lighted room.*)

(*People in the street pass.*)

(MRS. THORNE *hastily shuts the window.*)

DR. THORNE (*piteously*). Helen!

(*The organ sounds from the church.*)

DR. THORNE (*turns suddenly, as if turning on an antagonist*). What art Thou that dost withstand me? I am a dead and helpless man. *What* wouldst Thou with me? *Where* gainest Thou thy force upon me? Art Thou verily that ancient Myth that men were wont to call Almighty God? (*He lifts his face to the sky; holds up his hands as if he held up a question or an argument.*)

CHOIR FROM THE CHURCH: —

"God is a Spirit.
God is a Spirit.

They that worship Him
Must worship Him in Spirit"—

MAGGIE (*opens the door. The lighted hall is seen behind*). There 's nobody here, Mrs. Thorne.

(MRS. THORNE, *wearing a slight, white shawl which falls from her as she moves, comes to the open door; motions* MAGGIE *away.*)

[*Exit* MAGGIE.

MRS. THORNE (*softly*). Esmerald? He might be out there in the dark. Who knows what spirits do? Esmerald? Would God that I had died for you! Oh, my dear!

DR. THORNE. *Helen!*

MRS. THORNE. If he were there he would answer me if it cost him his living soul.

DR. THORNE. Helen, I answer you, for I *am* a living soul. *Helen!* (*He struggles mightily; crawls up the steps, reaches with the tips of his fingers the fringe of her white shawl, which has fallen down the steps, and lies there unnoticed.*) Helen, look down!

Down. (*He clutches the white fringe to his lips. He kisses it wildly.*)

(MRS. THORNE *lifts her face to the sky.*)

DR. THORNE. I can't get any higher, — not any nearer, dear.

MRS. THORNE. There is no one here. (*Weeping.*) There is nothing here. (*She shuts the door slowly and reluctantly; remembers the shawl, which she draws in with her.*)

(DR. THORNE *clings to the shawl in vain. Moaning, he kisses the doorsteps of his own home where the garment had touched them.*)

END OF SCENE II.

SCENE III.

A narrow defile or pass between high mountains. The light is dim. The pass winds irregularly, and is often rough, but is always upwards. The scenery is unearthly. No sign of life is to be seen. A distant storm can be heard.

Enter DR. THORNE (*slowly, holding a*

staff; he is robed in purple, a flowing garment, not unlike a talith or a toga. His face, still pale, is heavily lined; but more with anxiety than with resentment; its expression is somewhat softer. He speaks).

Dr. Thorne. I wonder what is to be done with me next? I see no particular reason for climbing these mountains. There seems to be nothing for a dead man to do but to obey orders. Well (*candidly*), I've given my share of them in my time. I suppose it's fair enough to turn about and take a few — now. (*He smiles. After a pause, climbing slowly.*) I must say I can't call this an attractive country — so far. Its main features are not genial.

(*The storm increases; there is thunder and cloud.*)

Dr. Thorne (*looking about*). It seems to be in the cyclonic belt. There's a storm of some sort, — I should say two of them fighting up in these hills. Hear them close

and clinch! Like a man's two natures; civil war all the time. And no truce! (*Muses.*) It's not a social region, certainly. I don't know that I recall, really, ever being in a place that was so desolate. There is n't so much as a wild animal, nor a bird flying over. It reminds me of — what was it? I can't recall the words. It seems to me my mother taught them to me when I was a little lad. But they have quite gone. Beautiful literature in that old Book! It's a good while since I 've dipped into it. I 've had too much to do. What was it?

"Though I walk — When I walk" —

(*He breaks off; climbs stoutly. The storm darkens down. For the first time* Dr. Thorne's *face expresses something like alarm. He looks about like a man who would call for help, but is too proud to do so. He speaks.*)

This is really growing serious. I wish I could remember those words. Now I think

of it, we were on our knees. A most unnatural posture! My mother was a sweet saint, — rest her pure spirit! (*It lightens as he says this.*)

VOICES FROM BEYOND (*softly chanting*).

"And when I'm lost in deep despair
Be thou with me. . . .
Until life's daylight ended be,
Be thou with me, with me."

DR. THORNE (*lifts his head to listen*). There's a good musical taste in this country, at all events. That's something. What *were* those words? Ah, I have it.

"Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow
Thou shalt be with me."

It went in some such way. (*Repeats perplexedly.*)

"*Thou* shalt be with me?"

(*Sadly.*) A beautiful superstition.

(*The storm comes on heavily, with darkness and lightning. Through the gloom his solitary form can be seen manfully*

climbing. He exhibits no panic, but his evident bewilderment grows upon him. He mutters.)

The desolation of desolations! I shall be glad when I get out of it. What solitude! Of all the people I have known — dead or living — there is not one to stay by me.

VOICES FROM BEYOND.

"Be Thou near him!"

Enter, on the pass above him, a young girl repeating prayers on a rosary. She is a plain, unattractive girl, folded in a dull gray gown that wraps her loosely. Her face is earnest and devout.

DR. THORNE. Why, Norah!

NORAH (*looking back*). Oh, it is the Doctor.

DR. THORNE. I can't overtake you, Norah.

NORAH. And I've only died the day.

DR. THORNE. But you've got the start

of me, Norah. You are higher up. I am glad to see you, Norah (*eagerly*). But I can't reach you.

NORAH (*holds down her hand*). Come up, Doctor! Come up! I'll help you, Doctor.

DR. THORNE (*gratefully*). Thank you, Norah.

NORAH. It 's to Purrgatory I 'd be goin'. But you 're the herretic, Doctor. Which way do you be goin'?

DR. THORNE (*shakes his head*). I don't know, Norah. You are wiser than I am — in this foreign place.

NORAH (*holds down her hand*). The dear Doctor! Ye were that kind to me, Doctor, — at the hospital, and forninst the house where I was worrkin'. It 's niver a cint I had to pay yez for yer thruble. If I 'd been a pretty lady with a purrse of gold, ye never could have put yerself about more than ye did for the likes of me. It 's not meself that would have died the day if

you 'd been there. Doctor? Would yez mind, if I should — bless you, Doctor? There 's kindness onto kindness, and mercy goin' after mercy that ye did me, all hidin' in a poor girrl's heart to rise and meet you here. I was sick an' ye did visit me.

Dr. Thorne (*melting*). When did I ever show you all that kindness, Norah? I don't remember —

Norah. And I don't forget. Take my hand, now, Doctor, do. It must be lonesome down below there by yersel'. (*Touches her rosary. Her lips move in prayer.*)

Dr. Thorne (*climbing on, grasps* Norah's *hand*). Thank you, Norah (*gently*).

(*There is a lull in the storm. It grows lighter.*)

(Dr. Thorne *and the Irish girl climb on together silently.*)

(*It brightens at the brow of the mountain. Dim outlines of figures are faintly seen at the summit. They waver, and melt away.*)

DR. THORNE (*gradually loosening his hold of* NORAH'S *hand, speaks, but not to* NORAH, *bitterly*). Now stop a moment. Where will all this end? Rebelling, I obey; and obeying, I rebel. I am become what we used to call a spirit. And this is what it means! Better might one become a molecule, for those at least express the Laws of the Universe, and do not suffer. I don't incline to go any higher. (*Drops back.*) Every step is taking me further away from my wife.

NORAH (*anxiously*). Doctor? Doctor! (*She climbs on, but looks back, beckoning.*)

DR. THORNE (*pays no attention to* NORAH. *Retraces his steps down the narrow path*). Come what may, I *will* not go any further from Helen. I'll perish first, in this unearthly place. (*He continues to descend; stands lost in thought. The storm darkens round him, but lightens beyond him. At the summit dim outlines can be seen again. These brighten faintly.*)

(NORAH *reaches her arms towards them; climbs on.*)

DR. THORNE. It was something to be in the same world with Helen. (*Muses.*) Oh, hot in my anger I went from her. And cold, indeed, did I return. (*Still descending.*) I will go back. I will get as near the old system of things as I can. I will not put another span of space between myself and Helen. Poor, poor girl!

(DR. THORNE, *doggedly descending, does not look up.*)

(*White-robed forms at the summit brighten. Arms are stretched downwards through a mist. Hands beckon. One of them reaches down and clasps* NORAH'S *hand; draws her up.*)

NORAH (*looking back*). Doctor!

(NORAH *vanishes.*)

(*The pass grows dark. Figures at the summit dim.*)

Enter, from a darkness in the mountains, the Woman *in flame-color. Her ashen*

mantle is now thrown back, but still clings to her. She stands mournfully regarding Dr. Thorne. *She does not address him, but slowly extends her arms.*)

(Dr. Thorne *does not observe the* Woman. *She does not obtrude herself upon his attention.*)

[*Exit the* Woman *into the darkness whence she came.*

Dr. Thorne (*with frowning face descends; he murmurs*). And a few days ago I was troubled because I had lost a few thousand *dollars* in Santa Ma. . . . I saved up *money!* (*Scornfully.*) I would accumulate a *fortune.* Oh, the whole of it, ten hundred thousand-fold the whole of it, for one hour in a dead man's desolated home! (*Pushes downwards, suddenly and silently.*)

Enter Azrael, Angel of Death. (*The pass blackens. The mountain summit is wrapped in darkness.*)

(AZRAEL *stands tall and resplendent. He is a white-robed figure, winged and powerful. The light falls only upon* AZRAEL *and upon the man. It can be seen that this gleam comes from a sword held in the hand of the Angel. Without a word he lifts the flaming sword, and with it bars the narrow pass from side to side.*)

DR. THORNE (*in a ringing voice*). Azrael!

(AZRAEL *does not reply.*)

DR. THORNE (*under his breath*). Azrael, Angel of Death! (*Falls back.*)

(*The two figures confront each other in silence.* DR. THORNE *desperately flings himself towards the Angel. Without a touch he is beaten back.* AZRAEL *stands immovable. His face grows solemn with pity.* DR. THORNE *retreats; advances again; raises his staff, and strikes it upon the Angel's sword. The staff flames up, burns, and drops to ashes on the ground.*)

(DR. THORNE *recedes a few steps; shades*

his eyes with his hands; regards the Angel blindly; wavers, turns. Slowly, with bent figure, he weakly reascends the mountain; stumbles and falls; regains his footing; climbs on alone, and now without his staff; does not look back.)

(AZRAEL *stands immovable, with drawn sword.*)

VOICES FROM BEYOND (*sing so softly that they seem rather to be breathing than singing*): —

"The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on. . . .
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost a while."

(*As they sing the summit mellows slowly. No figures appear. At the brow of the mountain a single gleam of light pierces the gloom. It brightens rather than broadens. It has the color of dawn.*)

(AZRAEL *fades away, the sword vanishing last.*)

(DR. THORNE *climbs up, with eyes lifted towards the light on the summit, which strikes his face and figure.*)

AS THE VOICES SING: —

"And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost a while."

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Paradise: A beautiful country. Trees, flowers, shrubs, vines of great luxuriance abound. Brilliant birds of unfamiliar plumage can be heard singing in the boughs. They dip, blazing, through the air. The grass is bright, and like short fur in effect. The sheen of water, like the surface of a lake or sea, glimmers beyond. Sails of faint, fair tints, move and melt upon the sea. At a distance, upon a hill, are outlines of graceful architecture. A narrow brook can be seen, with strange shells upon its little banks. There are no highways visible. Foot-worn walks and paths, trodden through the grass, intersperse the landscape. The grass, however, springs afresh beneath the foot, and is not crushed or sear. Annunciation lilies and scarlet passion-flowers grow in the foreground. Bluebells, in clusters, spring beyond. Roses are many. Flowers unknown to the botanies of earth are frequent; and among those to which we are used, it will be noticed that the blossoms of the tropics and of the North countries flourish side by side. The whole impression is one of delight and beauty. The sky has a misty softness, and the atmosphere is capable of taking on (and takes on) sudden

and subtle changes of effect. It is now seen to be early morning, and all the tints of the landscape are tender and fresh.

The scene is populous with *bright beings*. These are seen to differ from the people of this planet chiefly in their joyousness of manner, and in a certain high expression, of which it might be said, in a word, that the absence of low motive, and the presence of a sense of ease and security, are the predominant features. These beings wear flowing robes of various tints — dove, rose, blue, corn, violet, silver, gold, and pearl. Here and there one appears garbed in the color of the pale leaf, and, in moving among the foliage, seems to have sprung from it. Many spirits are clothed in shining white. Happy conversation and gentle laughter can be heard.

Enter Two Children. *These play in the brook, and gather the shells. They are robed in short, childish garments — a little frock, a little dress, both white, and each clasped by a small, golden cross.*

First Child (*a boy, four or five years old*). I never saw such pretty shells in that other place we lived. They took me to the seaside summers, but there were n't any there that began to be so pretty.

SECOND CHILD (*a girl*). *I* never played with *any* shells before. We lived in a street. It was dark and dirty. I never saw the sea till I came here.

FIRST CHILD. I never saw you in that other place, did I?

SECOND CHILD. No. You would n't have played with me there.

FIRST CHILD. I like you here — don't I?

SECOND CHILD. And I like you. I like you best of anybody I 've seen in this pretty country.

FIRST CHILD. Do you like roses? Or don't you care for anything but shells?

SECOND CHILD (*adoringly*). I like roses, if you like roses.

(*They leave the brook, and gather roses, pelting each other with them, and laughing merrily.*)

(FIRST CHILD *tosses a rose over the brook.*)

(SECOND CHILD *picks a bluebell, and puts it to her lips.*)

First Child. No. They're not to eat. They're to listen to. See! I'll ring mine. Hark! (*He rings the bluebell. It gives out a musical tintinnabulation.*) Now, you hark again. I never heard a bluebell ring in that other place, did you?

Second Child. I never saw one on our street. . . . Oh, *mine* rings, too! . . . Say! Are these angels? I never saw an angel either, in our street.

(The Children *wander away and mingle with the groups of spirits. They ring the bluebells as they go. The tintinnabulation is drowned in orchestral music, which can be heard from a distance. The theme is from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Certain of the spirits listen attentively, and move towards the music. Certain others continue to talk happily, and stir among the trees.*)

Enter Dr. Thorne. (*Walks slowly and alone. He is robed still in purple, with a tunic of white showing at the*

throat. He looks pallid and harassed. He stands for a time apart, keenly observant of the scene and of the people, then sinks in thought. He speaks.)

DR. THORNE. Children here, too?

(*He looks wistfully at the two children, who are playing together at a distance from him. He picks up the rose which the little boy had tossed over the brook; puts it to his face; speaks.*)

DR. THORNE. What a perfume the flowers have in this country! This seems to be a rose, yet it is not a rose. You might call it the soul of a rose. Exquisite, whatever it is. Some one has dropped this one. There is personality clinging to it. Curious! It is as though I clasped a little hand when I touch it.

(*He sighs; walks to and fro thoughtfully; does not throw away the rose, but cherishes it. Groups of spirits pass and repass. Some of them smile at him kindly,*

but he does not return the smile. No one addresses him.)

Dr. Thorne. I have done my share of traveling in my day, but I must say I never was in a land that seems to me so foreign as this. Nothing looks natural. I seem to have no acquaintances. Apparently nobody knows me. I have no introductions. I am afraid I have got here without letters of credit. (*Breaks off.*) That was a mistake. I never did such an ignorant thing before. I must say it is an attractive country, too. Everything shows a high degree of civilization, and the beauty of the place is unsurpassed. But it does not appeal to me. (*He shakes his head.*) . . . I am too homesick. . . . If Helen were here, I could enjoy it.

(*He strolls about without aim or interest. Happy spirits pass and repass.*)

Enter a man-spirit of impressive and commanding appearance. His costume bears a certain vague resemblance

to the dress of a gentleman and scholar of the Court of Charles I. of England. A cloak of the tint of the dead oak-leaf is clasped across his breast by a golden cross. He regards DR. THORNE *with a piercing but kindly look. He speaks with a fine and courtly manner, dating from a bygone age.*

THE MAN-SPIRIT. I read thee for a stranger here.

DR. THORNE (*bitterly*). A stranger in a strange place am I, indeed. You are the first inhabitant of this country who has troubled himself to speak to me. Thank you for your politeness, sir.

THE MAN-SPIRIT. I was commanded. These (*waving his hand toward the groups of spirits*) were not.

DR. THORNE. You look like a person more fitted to give commands than to receive them. I fail to understand that word — *commanded.* I am — at least, I was —

a sovereign citizen of America. I was not born or trained a subject.

THE MAN-SPIRIT (*smiling*). And I was subject of an English sovereign — in fact, an officer of the royal court.

DR. THORNE (*without smiling*). And this nation? Is it an autocratic monarchy you have here? What *is* your political system?

THE MAN-SPIRIT. It is a simple one — a pure theocracy.

DR. THORNE (*indifferently*). Oh, theocracy? That is a system into which I have never studied. I have been a busy man. I was a physician — (*Abruptly.*) Would you favor me with your name?

THE MAN-SPIRIT. I was a healer of the sick in my time. My name was — (*Whispers his name.*)

DR. THORNE (*starts with pleased surprise*). The great *Harvey?* And *you* discovered the circulation of the blood? How wonderful! Why, I thought you had

been mould and clover these two hundred and fifty years! It never occurred to me that you were alive. . . . What an extraordinary fact!

HARVEY (*turns away wearily*). I did not think to find your education so limited. I understood you to be a man of superior powers.

DR. THORNE (*humbly*). Don't leave me, Doctor Harvey! I am the most unhappy man in this most happy country.

HARVEY (*slowly*). Then you did not bring with you the materials of happiness. What had you? What *were* your possessions in the life yonder?

DR. THORNE (*solemnly, but still bitterly*). Love, happiness, home, health, prosperity, fame, wealth, ambition. None of them did I bring with me. I have lost them all upon the way.

HARVEY. Was there by chance nothing else?

DR. THORNE. Nothing more, unless you count a little incidental usefulness.

HARVEY. Plainly, you are not in a normal condition.

DR. THORNE (*hastily*). I am perfectly well.

HARVEY. You are sick of soul. You are not in health of spirit. You are out of harmony with your atmosphere. Do you wish me to take the case?

DR. THORNE. Take the case, Doctor Harvey. Cure me of my nostalgia. Show me how to become a citizen of this foreign land.

HARVEY. You know what it means to be a patient.

DR. THORNE (*grimly*). I can think of no worse fate; but I 'll make the best of it.

HARVEY (*smiling kindly*). I will undertake the case. At evening inquire your way to my dwelling. (*Moves away; returns; hesitates; lingers; speaks impulsively.*) Concerning the latest attainments in science on the planet Earth — they have the keenest interest for me. You have so

many advantages — facilities that we never had. (*He sighs wistfully.*) I am told that your therapeutics are really wonderful. And the advances in surgery? Did you find them as beautiful as they are said to be?

Enter a newly arrived woman-spirit. She is still pale, but has a happy expression. She recognizes DR. THORNE; *cries eagerly.*

WOMAN-SPIRIT. Doctor! Doctor Thorne!

HARVEY. Here comes some of your incidental usefulness. That is a good symptom. (*He moves away, still smiling.*)

[*Exit* HARVEY.

DR. THORNE. Why, Mrs. True! (*Grasps her hand joyfully.*) You are the first person I have seen — the first one I knew! But (*reflecting*) what has happened to you? How did you get here?

MRS. TRUE. I died yesterday. . . . I knew I should see you, Doctor. (*Calmly.*) I counted on that.

DR. THORNE (*starting back*). Did they

— you don't mean to say they really operated on you? You were convalescent!

MRS. TRUE (*laughing outright*). Yes, in a week after you were killed. Dr. Carver vivisected guinea-pigs all that week to keep in practice. I died under the knife. . . . I wish you 'd seen their faces!

DR. THORNE (*eagerly*). What did they find — anything to justify the butchery?

MRS. TRUE. Of course not. Did n't you say there was n't?

DR. THORNE (*gratefully*). You always were a loyal patient — better than I deserved.

MRS. TRUE. You always were a kind doctor — better than I deserved.

DR. THORNE. And they slaughtered you in my hospital!

MRS. TRUE (*hurrying on*). Have you seen my husband? Do you know where my mother is? I lost a baby twenty years ago. I want to see the little thing. And oh, when can I see —?

(*She breaks off, with a devout expression,*

and moves away; joins the upper group of spirits. Two of these can be seen to meet and embrace her, and lead her on.)

[*Vanish* MRS. TRUE.

Enter JERRY, *the loafer, hurriedly and stumbling. His robe is of dull blue, something in the fashion of a smock-frock, or butcher's blouse.*

JERRY (*staring about him stupidly, and with a kind of social embarrassment, as if he had been suddenly introduced into a drawing-room*). Div-niver a cint in me pocket, and me hoofin' it in this quaer coun-three. (*Scratches his head, and mutters unintelligibly.*) . . . I wondher where the . . . sinsible saints I 'm at.

DR. THORNE (*steps forward; speaks*). Why, Jerry! How are you, Jerry? (*Holds out his hand heartily.*)

JERRY (*staring*). Sinsible saints, and silly sinners! Doctor Thorne? . . . Why, I thought you was dead. Hilloa, Doctor! (*Grasps the doctor's hand, and shakes it*

violently. Then meditatively.) Ye took a t'orn out av me eye onct, and div-niver a cint did ye charrge for 't.

DR. THORNE. What are you doing here, Jerry? How did you get here?

JERRY. I was knocked down by a blame bicycle underneat' a murdherin' trolley car. Nixt I know I don't know nothin', an' now, behold me, I 'm let loose loafin' in this quaer counthree.

DR. THORNE. Not drunk, were you, Jerry?

JERRY (*shaking his head gravely*). I shwore off, Doctor. I shwore off t'ree years ago. Me little gurrl she give me no repose till I shwore off. . . . She died jist av the hospittle, did me little gurrl. . . . Say, Doctor, do ye know what 's the thramp laws in this counthree?

Enter NORAH *hastily.*

NORAH. Doctor — Doctor Thorne? Have you seen — oh, there he is! There 's me father! Why, Father, Father dear! (*Caresses* JERRY *affectionately.*)

JERRY. Och! wisha, wisha! Norah, me darlint! (*Returns her caresses tenderly.*) What luck for the likes of us arrivin' emigrants thegither in this agra-able counthree!

NORAH (*puts her arm in his*). Come yonder wid me, Father. (*Draws him away.*)

JERRY (*looks back over his shoulder at* DR. THORNE). Is it to confession we do be goin', Norah? — the wan av us arrivin' be way of a murdherin' doctor, and the wan be way av a murdherin' trolley! I 'm thinkin', sir, it 's niver a cint to choose bechune.

[*Exeunt* JERRY *and* NORAH.

DR. THORNE (*watches their departure drearily; turns, and walks feebly towards the brook; speaks*). Now I think of it, I have not tasted food or drink since I have been in this place. I believe I am downright faint.

(*Drinks water from the brook in the palm of his hand; sinks beneath the low boughs of a tree on thick moss. His head*

falls upon his arm. From a distance, and from a height, slowly moving downwards, over the beautiful landscape, robed in cream white, and unseen by Dr. Thorne,

Enter Mrs. Fayth.

As she approaches, it can be seen that her robe also is clasped across the breast by a little golden cross.)

Spirits beyond (*softly chant the Te Deum*).

"We praise Thee, O God: we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord"—

(*Midway of the landscape, and playing merrily,*)

Enter the Two Children.

First Child (*running to* Mrs. Fayth). Oh, here I am! (*He clasps her hand; clings to her affectionately.*)

Mrs. Fayth (*to* Second Child). Run yonder and play, Maidie.

(Second Child *obeys prettily, and joins the spirits above.* Mrs. Fayth *and the* First Child *move slowly to the front of the landscape.*)

THE CHILD. See that poor man under the tree! I think he 's a hungry man — don't you?

(*He breaks away from* MRS. FAYTH, *and runs to* DR. THORNE; *examines the exhausted man attentively, bending forward with his hands on his little knees.* MRS. FAYTH *advances slowly, with her mysterious smile; she does not speak.*)

THE CHILD (*touches* DR. THORNE *timidly; after a silence speaks, ceremoniously*). Would you like a peach, or do you like plums instead? I 'll pick you one.

DR. THORNE (*arousing*). Who spoke to me? Oh, it is a child. (*Sinks back feebly.*)

(The Child *gathers some fruit from the trees, and brings water from the brook in the cup of an annunciation lily, which holds the liquid perfectly; offers the food and drink to the exhausted man.* MRS. FAYTH, *still unseen by* DR. THORNE, *stands quite near, nodding and smiling at* The Child.

The Child *looks to her for encouragement and direction.*)

Dr. Thorne (*reviving*). Thank you, my little man. (*Leans on his elbow, and gazes steadfastly at* The Child; *rises to a sitting posture.*)

The Child (*creeps nearer to* Dr. Thorne, *and, after a moment's hesitation, throws his little length full on the moss at the man's feet, and scrutinizes him seriously, putting his chin into his hand as he does so; speaks sympathetically*). Do you feel better now?

Dr. Thorne. Much better. You're a thoughtful little fellow.

The Child. Our breakfasts grow all cooked here. This is a nice country.

Dr. Thorne (*still gazing steadfastly at* The Child). Where is your mother, my lad?

The Child. I don't know. I lost her on the way, somewhere.

Dr. Thorne. And your father? What has become of your father?

THE CHILD. Oh, *he's* dead. He got dead before I came here.

MRS. FAYTH (*moves within* DR. THORNE'S *range of vision; speaks quietly*). Good-morning, Doctor. (*Smiles brightly.*)

DR. THORNE (*springs to his feet; cries out*). Mary Fayth! I thought you had forgotten me! I have — needed you.

(The Child *rises; leans up against* DR. THORNE'S *knee confidingly.*)

MRS. FAYTH. I have often needed *you*, Doctor. And you never failed me once.

DR. THORNE (*impetuously*). I thought you would have come before. I looked for you —

MRS. FAYTH. As I have often looked for *you*. But I was not commanded to meet you — till this very minute.

DR. THORNE. Commanded? Commanded? There is that singular phrase again. Have you seen Helen? (*Quickly.*)

MRS. FAYTH (*shakes her head*). Not yet.

DR. THORNE. Have you seen your husband? Did they let *you* go to *Fred?*

MRS. FAYTH (*contentedly*). Oh, many times.

THE CHILD (*interrupting*). He does n't kiss me! (*Puts up his lips in a grieved, babyish fashion.*)

MRS. FAYTH (*very quietly*). Doctor, don't hurt that child's feelings. He 's yours.

DR. THORNE (*gasping*). I don't understand you!

MRS. FAYTH. I have had the care of him since he came here. He 's kept me busy, I can tell you. I am to give him over to you now. . . . See how he 's grown! No wonder you did n't know him.

DR. THORNE (*in great agitation*). Did Laddie *die?*

MRS. FAYTH (*solemnly*). Yes, Laddie died.

DR. THORNE. Did something really ail him that night — that most miserable night? . . . Oh, poor Helen! Poor, poor Helen! (*His face falls into his hands. His frame shakes with soundless, tearless sobs.*)

LADDIE (*creeps into his lap; lays his head on his father's neck*). Hilloa, Papa! (*Pats his father on the cheek.*)

[*Exit* MRS. FAYTH *silently, with emotion.*

DR. THORNE (*raises his head, showing his stormy face. Clasps the child, hesitatingly at first, then passionately; holds him off at arm's length; scans him closely; draws him back; kisses his little hands, then his face; clasps him again*). My little son! Papa's little boy! My son! My little son! (*Smiles naturally for the first time since he died; then with sudden recollection, he cries out.*) Oh, what will your poor mother do without you?

LADDIE. You homesick, Papa?

DR. THORNE. My little son! (*Caresses the child with a touching timidity, broken by bursts of wild affection. The child responds warmly, laughing for joy.*)

END OF SCENE I.

SCENE II.

Dull daylight falls upon a wide and desolate expanse. This has the appearance of a desert — unbroken and arid. The horizon is low and heavy with cloud, and is defined by a tossing sea-line against which no sail appears. In the distance are cliffs, fissured by dark cuts, but these are far away, and the foreground is flat like sand or ashes, or it might be corrugated like slag. There is no vegetation visible, and no sign of organized life.

Enter DR. THORNE. (*He paces the sands, mournfully gazing about him at the lonely scenery. He murmurs, then raises his voice rhythmically, like one who quotes from an uncertain memory.*)

DR. THORNE.

> "A life as hollow as the echo in a cave
> Hid in the heart of an unpeopled world."

Where did I get that? Oh, I remember. I had not thought of it for years. That woman used to quote it to me. She was the most consistent infidel I ever knew. She shied at nothing; took the consequences,

both living and dying. . . . A shocking death, though! I suppose the boy is all right with Mrs. Fayth and that little chum of his. If it had n't been for that discussion with Harvey I should n't have left him. Wishing seems to be doing, in this singular state of existence. A man makes a simple astronomical inquiry about a planet, and forthwith he is in the planet. Remarkable! (*Breaks off; continues.*) How magnificent Helen was about that affair. If she had doubted me — but she never did. She was superb.

Enter an Evil Spirit. *Her garments are of flame color. Her hair has the same tint. On her forehead blazes a single scarlet star. Her appearance is queenly and confident. As she reveals her face, it is seen to be that of the woman whose wraith has followed* Dr. Thorne *at intervals ever since the hour of his death. Her robe, which is opaque, reveals her bare*

arms and feet, but covers her shoulders and bosom with a certain modesty, which is felt at once to be not wholly natural to the woman. Each footprint that she makes upon the sand is marked by a small jet of flame, which flares after she has passed, and dies down quickly. DR. THORNE *stares at the woman in evident and not well-pleased perplexity.*

THE WOMAN (*speaks*). So? Am I forgotten on first principles? It is some years since we had the pleasure of meeting.

DR. THORNE (*coldly*). I begin to recognize you, Madam.

CLEO. You did not know it, but I have given you several other opportunities to do so since you died.

DR. THORNE. I should think that quite possible — and characteristic.

CLEO (*wincing*). Your tongue has not lost its edge! I 'm afraid they have not made a hopeful convert of you in yonder

pious country. . . . Confess, you 're bored past endurance with the whole thing? (*She draws a little nearer to him, but is so adroit as not to touch him. She gives him only her eyes, and these embrace him outright.*)

Dr. Thorne (*regarding her steadily*). Did I ever choose *you* for a confidante? (*He steps back.*)

Cleo (*persistently*). Come, don't be cross! Tell me, then, why have you fled the first circles of celestial society — to mope out here alone? Oh, you can't deceive me. *I* understand — I always understood you better than any other woman living. (*In a low tone.*) Your whole nature is in antagonism with the very basis of existence in the state you 're plunged into. What 's death? Nothing but a footstep. You 've taken it. But you 're the man you were. . . . Pouf! *That 's* death. (*Snaps her fingers.*) I 'd wager a waltz and a kiss that you are *ennuyé* to madness over there. . . .

Admit it? (*Tenderly.*) Admit it! (*Imperiously.*)

Dr. Thorne (*uneasily*). I don't profess to be thoroughly acclimated. But I assure you I did not come here to sulk. On the contrary, I was absorbingly interested in a scientific discussion with a distinguished man. It was an astronomical point. I came here to verify it. I return at once. (*Moves away.*)

Cleo. Don't be in such a blatant hurry! It 's not polite. (*Pouting.*) I've studied a little astronomy myself of late. . . . Come! I can converse about planets — if you will. Was it Neptune or Venus you undertook to investigate?

Dr. Thorne (*not without interest*). I contended that it was Neptune — before I came.

Cleo. And now?

Dr. Thorne (*gloomily gazing at her*). I am inclined to think it is Venus.

(Cleo *laughs softly.*)

(DR. THORNE *does not smile.*)

CLEO (*abruptly*). Esmerald Thorne, do you know what has happened? You are in an uninhabited world — with me. You are in a dead world, burnt to ashes, burnt to slag and lava by its own fires. You are alone in it — *alone with me.* . . . (*In a changed voice.*) *And I meant you should be.* Oh, I've dreamed of this for years. I've held my breath for it, perished for it. . . . Now, here we are — we two outcasts from the religious idea — we who always rebelled against it, by the very bone and tissue of our being. . . . We two (*tenderly*) *alone, at last.* (*She advances towards him, and for the first time touches him, gently laying her hand upon his shoulder.*)

DR. THORNE (*not rudely, but positively, removes her hand, stepping back quickly, so that her arm falls heavily by her side*). Woman! Woman, what are you? A spirit damned, or a spirit deluded? . . . I con-

fess I never knew. And I don't know any better now.

CLEO (*more modestly lifts his hand to her cheek; speaks gently*). Do you know any better now?

DR. THORNE (*withdrawing his hand*). My wife always said you were half angel, half the other thing. She pitied you, I think. I confess I never did, very much.

CLEO (*wretchedly*). I never asked for the pity of Helen Thorne!

DR. THORNE (*firmly*). You might well receive it, Madam. It would not harm you any.

CLEO (*suddenly*). Oh, everybody knew you were an irreproachable husband. A blameless physician, of course. But we have changed all that. You are quite free now — as free as I am, for that matter. . . .

DR. THORNE (*nobly*). Yes; I am free, as you say. I am free to mourn my wife, and love her . . . and await her presence . . . which has a value to me that I do not . . . I cannot discuss — with *you*.

CLEO (*rebuffed, but gentle and sad*). I beg your pardon, Dr. Thorne.

DR. THORNE (*takes a few steps nearer her*). And I yours . . . if I have wronged you.

CLEO (*softly*). You feel so sure of her, then? Helen is so attractive! These spiritual women always are — up to a certain point. . . . Life is a long wait, brutally tedious. You know as well as I do how many — Now, there is Dr. Gazell. A very consolable widower.

DR. THORNE (*proudly*). Oh, that was a blunt stroke. *Gazell?* If Gazell were a dog by which my wife might track her way to me through the mystery of death . . . she might have some use for him . . . hardly otherwise. I gave you credit for some wit, Cleo.

CLEO. I own the illustration was defective. But there are a plenty better. There are gentler men than you. For my part, I don't mind your attacks of the devil. I

never did. I'd take your cruelty to have your tenderness — any day. But Mrs. Thorne is sensitive to kindness. She likes the even disposition, the patient, model man. After all, there are a good many of them.

DR. THORNE (*lifting his head*). I am not afraid.

CLEO (*turning away*). And you? She is a young woman. It may be years . . .

DR. THORNE (*coldly*). You will have to excuse me. I left some one. . . . I may be missed. I have ties which even you would respect, Madam. I must return whence I came. (*He moves away.*)

(CLEO *hides her face in her hands; is heard to weep.*)

DR. THORNE (*steps back*). Do you want my pity?

CLEO (*murmurs*). Alone — in a desert world — we two — at last. Oh, you don't know the alphabet of happiness! You have everything to learn . . . from me. And we shall never be like this again!

DR. THORNE (*frankly*). I hope not.

CLEO (*suddenly starting, paces the ashes; throws her arms above her head*). I always said you had a Nero in you. . . . Oh, I understood you —*I!* But *you* . . . It never occurred to you, I suppose, that you died on my very day? I had been dead three years that night.

DR. THORNE (*more gently*). What did you do it for, Cleo? You know I warned you about that habit. You know I took the laudanum away from you.

CLEO. But you could not cork up the Limited Express — could you?

DR. THORNE. It was a dreadful death! Tell me, how do you fare? Where do you live? Do you suffer? What is your lot?

CLEO (*with sudden reserve, and not without dignity*) We suicides have our own fate. We bear it. We do not reveal it.

DR. THORNE (*uncomfortably*). Well — I must bid you good-morning.

CLEO (*savagely*). At least, I gained some-

thing — if I lose all. Of course, it never dawned on you that this was all my scheme?

DR. THORNE (*in dismay*). *Your scheme?*

CLEO (*past control, raves*). Oh, I had watched my chance for years. I knew *you* — your mad moods, your black temper. . . . Yourself slew yourself, Esmerald Thorne. Your own weakness gave me my opportunity. I waited for my moment. I sat in the buggy beside you. . . . I sometimes did that when your evil had you. (I could n't get there when you were good, you know.) I tried to take the reins. *I tried to get the whip* — I could not do it. *I meant to hit the horse* — my arm was held. (There are always so many of these holy busybodies about — angels and messengers of sanctity — to interfere with one!) Oh, then I sprang out — over the wheel into the street. You did n't see me, *but Donna did.* When she shied I clung to her bit. And then she bolted. . . . It was a very simple thing.

(DR. THORNE *recoiling slowly, an expression of cold horror chills his features.*)

CLEO (*still raving*). Yes, I've murdered you — if you will — and Mary Fayth besides. And I've broken Helen's heart. Do you suppose that counts? Who counts? Nobody on earth, or in heaven, or in hell. *I've got you away from your wife.* . . . And in earth, or in heaven, or in hell, I'll have you yet. . . .

DR. THORNE (*throwing out his hands; holds her off with evidences of unbearable repulsion; speaks with difficulty*). And I pitied you a moment since. Now I cannot scorn you. It is too fine a word.

CLEO (*more calmly*). I can abide my time.

Enter LADDIE, *running rapidly.*

LADDIE. Papa, Papa! Oh, I missed you, Papa!

CLEO (*starting*). I did not know the child was dead! (*Looks disconcerted.*)

DR. THORNE (*catches the child, and holds*

him to his heart; speaks). No. You only knew you left him fatherless. (*With much agitation, continues.*) How did you get here, Laddie? How did you find the way? Papa had n't forgotten his little boy. I was coming right back to you, my son.

LADDIE (*mysteriously; looking about*). A man with wings brought me. We flowed over. . . . He is waiting out there to take us back. (*Observing* CLEO, LADDIE *slips down to the ground, and backs up against his father's knees; points at the woman.*) Papa, I don't like that lady.

DR. THORNE (*cruelly*). My son, I cannot deny that I respect your taste. (*Clasps the boy to his heart again; then puts him down once more, and, with a fine motion, holds the child at arm's-length between himself and the woman.*)

CLEO (*averting her face*). I perceive the importance of the obstacle. I admit . . . that to love a man who is the father of another woman's child —

DR. THORNE (*interrupting*). And who loves the mother of his child —

(CLEO *sobs.*)

DR. THORNE. Come, Laddie. (*He does not glance at the woman again.*)

[*Exeunt* DR. THORNE *and* LADDIE.

CLEO (*yearning after him; stretches out her arms, but does not follow; calls mournfully*). Oh, if you would come back a minute — only a minute! . . . In heaven, or earth, or hell, I 'd never ask *any*thing of you again. A minute, a *minute!*

(DR. THORNE *does not return, and does not reply.* CLEO *is left alone in the dead world. She falls flat upon the slag and ashes.*)

END OF SCENE II.

SCENE III.

Picturesquely visible among the trees of a grove appears a small, rustic cottage, curiously interwoven of bark, vines, boughs, leaves, and flowers — a building which seems to have grown from the conditions and the colors of the grove. The sea and the sails

show beyond, through the trees. In the distant perspective can be seen the city on the hill; in the intervale, the foliage, flowers, fields, as before.

The hour approaches sunset. A deep rich glow mellows and melts the outlines of every object.

(*Spirits pass and repass in the distance.*)

Enter DR. THORNE *and* HARVEY, *conversing in low tones.*

Enter NORAH *and* JERRY.

JERRY. The brim of the avenin' to yez, Doctor! Och! but this is a foine counthree now.

NORAH (*happily*). Me father is getting acquainted here.

JERRY. I'm about to discover where the . . . angels . . . I'm at.

DR. THORNE (*smiling*). You 've got ahead of me then, Jerry.

[*Exeunt* NORAH *and* JERRY.

DR. THORNE (*to* HARVEY). And why, for instance, was I directed or allowed to take that astronomical tour before I had investigated my immediate surroundings?

HARVEY. A patient may *ask* questions.

In your experience, did you always answer them?

Enter LADDIE (*running after his father, whose hand he hurries to catch and clasp*).

DR. THORNE (*pointing to the architecture beyond*). And those public buildings yonder — what do you call them?

HARVEY. Those are our institutions of education and of mercy. They are a great pleasure to us. We have our temples, colleges, music halls, libraries, schools of science, hospitals, galleries of art, as a matter of course. What did you *suppose* we did with our intellects and our leisure?

DR. THORNE. I never supposed anything on the subject. I never thought about it.

HARVEY. Precisely. You are very ignorant — for a man of your gifts. Now, our hospitals —

DR. THORNE. Pray do not mock me, Doctor Harvey. If you *had* a hospital, you could find me something to do. The

humiliating idleness of this place crushes me. I seem to be of no more use here than a paralytic patient was in my own charity ward at home. I am become of no more social importance than the janitor or the steward used to be. I am of no consequence. I am not in demand. No person desires my services. The canker of idleness eats upon me. Here, in this world of spirits, I am an unscientific, useless fellow. If you have anything whatever in the shape of a hospital, I beg you to find me employment in it. At least, I could keep the temperature charts, if I am not to be trusted with any cases.

HARVEY (*smiling sadly*). Your cure proceeds but slowly, my patient. I did not think you were a *dull* man. Must you be taught the elements? Our sick are not of the body, but are sick of soul. Our patients are chiefly from among the newly arrived who are at odds with the spirit of the place; hence, they suffer discomfort. Can *you* administer holiness to a will and heart diseased?

(DR. THORNE *shakes his head; bows it in bitter silence. He stands lost in thought. As he does so, sunset deepens to twilight on the land.* LADDIE *drops his father's hand; plays among the annunciation lilies.* HARVEY, *with a courtly salute, retires. He does not speak further to* DR. THORNE.)

[*Exit* HARVEY.

LADDIE (*breaks one of the tall lily-stalks — gently, for a boy. As he does so, the cup opens, and a little white bird flies out, hangs poised in the air a moment*). Oh, the beautiful! (*Catches the bird, which he handles tenderly.*) Papa! Papa! I went to pick a lily, and I picked a bird! Oh, Papa, what a pretty country!

DR. THORNE (*smiling in spite of himself*). Come here, my lad. (*Caresses the child with pathetic gratitude.*) If it were not for you, little man — (*Bows his face on the child's head.*)

(*The twilight changes slowly to moonlight.*)

LADDIE (*restlessly*). I must go find Maidie and show her my white bird. They did n't grow in her street.

DR. THORNE (*anxiously*). Don't go far, my child. You might lose your way.

LADDIE (*with a peal of laughter*). We *never* lose our way in this nice country.

[*Exit* LADDIE.

(DR. THORNE *paces the path desolately; does not speak. As the moonlight brightens, groups of spirits stroll among the fields and trees. These walk often two by two. They are, and yet are not, like earthly lovers. They murmur softly, and express delight to be together; and some of them go hand in hand, or with arms intertwined. But a beautiful reserve pervades their behavior. Faintly from beyond arise the strains of the Serenade of Schubert's, played with extreme softness and refinement, but with a depth of emotion which carries the heart before it.* DR. THORNE *listens to the music. The sails quiver on the distant*

water, and faint figures can be seen moving on the beach. The passion flowers salute each other. The great Serenade plays on.)

Enter MRS. FAYTH. (*Her smiling face is grave, or even a little sad. She is moved by the music, and seems to sway towards it.* DR. THORNE *holds out his hand to her.* MRS. FAYTH *extends her own, confidingly. The two stand listening to the music, like comrades bereft of other ties; on her face rests a frank, affectionate expression; on his a desolate leaning towards the nearest sympathy. They glance at the spirits who are strolling two by two through the celestial evening. The music is suspended.*)

DR. THORNE (*moodily*). This foreign country would be lonelier without you, Mary Fayth.

MRS. FAYTH (*frankly*). Of course it would! . . . It is a lovely thing that we died together. . . . It has been a comfort to me, Doctor.

DR. THORNE. And to me. . . . Helen would be pleased. . . . Helen might like to have it so, I 've thought . . . if she thinks of me at all.

MRS. FAYTH (*quickly*). She thinks of nothing but you . . . all the time.

DR. THORNE (*eagerly*). How do you know? Have you been there? Can *you* see Helen?

MRS. FAYTH (*mysteriously smiling*). Don't ask me! . . .

DR. THORNE (*imperiously*). When was it? How did you get there? How did she look? — Is she well? — Did she look very wretched? Were her lips pale? Or only her cheeks? Does she weep much? Can she sleep? — Is she living quite alone? — Oh, how does she bear it? (*He trips upon his words, and stops abruptly.*)

(*A strain from the Serenade breathes, and sighs away.*)

MRS. FAYTH (*gently but evasively*). My poor friend!

(DR. THORNE *and* MRS. FAYTH *unclasp hands, and stand side by side, silently in the moonlight. A certain remoteness overtakes their manner. Each is drowned in thought in which the other has no share. The Serenade is heard again.* MRS. FAYTH, *with a mute, sweet gesture of farewell, glides gravely away.* DR. THORNE *does not seek to detain her.*)

[*Exit* MRS. FAYTH.

(*The Serenade plays on steadily.*)

DR. THORNE (*puts his hands to his ears, as if to shut out the music, which falls very faintly as he speaks*). Between herself and me the awful gates of death have shut. To pass them — though I would die again to do it — to pass them for one hour, for one moment, for love's sake, for grief's sake — or for pity's own — I am forbidden. (*Breaks off.*) . . . Her forgiveness! Her forgiveness! The longing for it gnaws upon me. . . . Oh, her unfathomable tenderness — passing the tenderness of women!

— It would lean out and take me back to itself, as her white arms took me to her heart — when I came home — after a hard day's work — tired out. . . . Helen! *Helen!*

(*The music strengthens as he ceases to speak; then faints again.*)

Dr. Thorne (*moans*). For very longing for her, I would fain forget her. . . . No! No! No! (*Starts.*) Never would I forget her! To all eternity would I think of her and suffer, if I must, because I think of her. . . . I . . . love her . . . so.

(*The Serenade ceases slowly, and sighs away.*)

(Dr. Thorne *stands with the moonlight on his face. It is rapt, and carries a certain majesty.*)

(*Spirits pass. Some of them glance at him, with wonder and respect. No one addresses him. He stands like a statue of strong and noble solitude. He does not perceive the presence of any spirit.*)

Enter The Child. (*Runs to his father. Springs into his arms.*)

THE CHILD. Lonesome, Papa? I will comfort you.

DR. THORNE (*clasps the boy, who seems half-overcome with sleepiness. Lays him gently on the grass*). Go to sleep, my child. It is growing late. (LADDIE *drops asleep.*)

DR. THORNE (*continues to speak, for his emotion bears him on*). I did not expect to live when I was dead. I lived — I died — and yet I live. I did not think that love would live when breath was gone. I loved — I blasphemed love — I breathed my last — and still I love. If this be true — *any*thing may be true — (*breaks off*). God! It may be years before I can see her face — twenty years — thirty — (*groaning*) — *Whence* came the love of man and woman, that it should outlive the laws of Nature, and defy dissolution, and outlast the body, and curse or bless the spirit? If love can live, anything can live. Since this is — *any*thing may be — (*Falters; glances about; finds*

himself quite alone with the sleeping child; lifts his eyes to the sky, and then his hands; stands irresolute. Then slowly, reluctantly, still standing manfully upright, with a touching embarrassment.)

DR. THORNE (*prays*). Almighty God! — if there be a God Almighty. Reveal thyself to my immortal soul! — if I have a soul immortal.

. . . . . .

(*The moonlight fades into a dark midnight. The figure of* DR. THORNE *disappears in it.*)

(*Dawn comes on subtly, but at once, for the nights and days of Paradise are not governed by the laws of earth, and day breaks splendidly over the heavenly world.*)

Enter the Two Children (*playing with flowers, and tasting fruit*).

LADDIE. How did you like coasting down that waterfall on rainbows?

MAIDIE. I want that butterfly — with fire on it.

LADDIE. Don't be stupid, because you 're dead! That is a flower. (*Picks a flower in the shape of a butterfly with jeweled wings; hands it to the girl.*) No, it won't fly. It is n't grown up yet.

MAIDIE. Shall I fly when I 'm grown up? I've got wings, too. (*Shows her feet, on the heels of which a tiny pair of wings appear.*)

LADDIE (*jealously*). I did n't know *you* had them. That 's why you can jump over things and get ahead of me.

Enter DR. THORNE *and* MRS. FAYTH.

MRS. FAYTH. Doctor, I don't know what ails me. Perhaps it 's a symptom — a moral symptom — but I can't help thinking of Cleo. I wonder —

DR. THORNE (*with reserve*). I do not care to speak of the woman.

MRS. FAYTH. You are right. But I did not mean to be wrong. (I think it must have been a symptom.) It 's the first time I 've felt nervous since I died. I beg your pardon.

LADDIE (*running to meet them*). Papa! Maidie 's got wings on her feet. Why don't *I* have some? Papa! Papa! Come into your new house. It grew up out of the woods — like — like acorns.

DR. THORNE (*addressing* MRS. FAYTH, *looking towards the cottage*). It is a shelter for the child, at all events. Quite in accordance with my present social position in this place — a mere cottage — but it makes him a home, poor little fellow!

MRS. FAYTH. It 's just what Helen would like. She hates palaces.

DR. THORNE (*starts as if stabbed; makes no reply*).

LADDIE (*suddenly*). Oh, Papa, Mrs. Fayth 's got wings on her feet, too. Her dress covers them up. I like her better than I did that lady you were so cross to.

MRS. FAYTH (*laughing*). I am so well! — oh, so well! I am a-shamed to be so happy! I walk on air. I float on clouds. I move on waves. All nature seems to be

under my feet, and her glory in my heart. . . . Poor Doctor! (*Breaks off and looks at him with quick sympathy.*) And yet I tru-ly think you im-prove in spirits. You don't look armed to the teeth, all the time — now.

Dr. Thorne (*smiles cheerfully*). A man must respect law, whatever state he is in. I would conform to the customs of this place, so far as I can. I would do this for the boy's sake, at least. I don't wish to be a disgrace to him in this system of things.

Mrs. Fayth. Does Doctor Harvey treat you by scien-ti-fic ev-olu-tion? That 's a man's way. It 's a pretty slow one.

Laddie (*insistently*). Papa, she *has* got wings on her feet.

Mrs. Fayth (*blushing*). Go away and play, children.

(*The children run to the cottage. The little girl bounds before, with a light, flying motion. They play in the cottage at "keeping house," running in and out.*)

(*Suddenly a change takes place upon the landscape. Its colors soften and melt. Flying tints, like light broken through many prisms, float upon the white flowers, rest upon the annunciation lilies, and delicately touch the white robe of* MRS. FAYTH. *In fact, the whole atmosphere takes on the appearance of a vast rainbow. Music from the temple sounds clearly.*)

VOICES (*can be heard singing*): —

"Thou that takest away the
Sins of the world!"

MRS. FAYTH (*starts with a listening, devout expression*). Do you hear that? . . . Oh, watch, Doctor! Watch for what will happen!

(*Spirits can be seen suddenly moving from all directions. They hurry, and exhibit signs of joyful excitement. The singing continues; repeats*: —

"Thou that takest away the
Sins of the world!")

(*Now over the brilliant landscape falls*

a long, sharp, strange shadow. It is seen to be the shadow of a mighty cross, which, if raised upright, would seem to reach from earth to heaven. The children run back from the cottage.)

LADDIE. Papa! who is worship? Is it a kind of game? Papa, what is Lord? Is it people's mother? What is it for?

DR. THORNE (*with embarrassment*). Alas, my boy, your father is not a learned man.

LADDIE (*imperiously*). Teach me that pretty song! I cannot sing it. All the other children can —

VOICES (*chanting*): —

"Thou givest,
Thou givest,
Eternal life!"

DR. THORNE (*sadly*). My son, I cannot sing it, either.

LADDIE (*with reproach, and with a certain dignity*). Father, I wish you *were* a learned man. (*Walks away from his fa-*

ther; goes up the path. The little girl follows him.)

(*The evidences of public excitement increase visibly. From every part of the country spirits can be seen moving, with signs of acute pleasure. Some hasten towards the Temple; others gather in groups in the roads and paths; all present a reverent but joyful aspect.*)

MRS. FAYTH (*gliding away*). I cannot lose a moment. (*Beckons to* DR. THORNE *as she moves out of the grove and up the path. Calls.*) Doctor! Doctor!

DR. THORNE (*shakes his head*). I do not understand.

(MRS. FAYTH *remains still full in sight, standing as if to watch a pageant or to see the prominent figure of a procession.*)

(LADDIE *runs on beyond her, watching eagerly; shades his eyes with his little hand.*)

(MAIDIE *flits along with him.*)

(DR. THORNE *stands quite alone. He,*

too, shades his eyes with his hand, and scans the horizon and the foreground closely.)

(*The shadow of the great cross falls upon him where he stands.*)

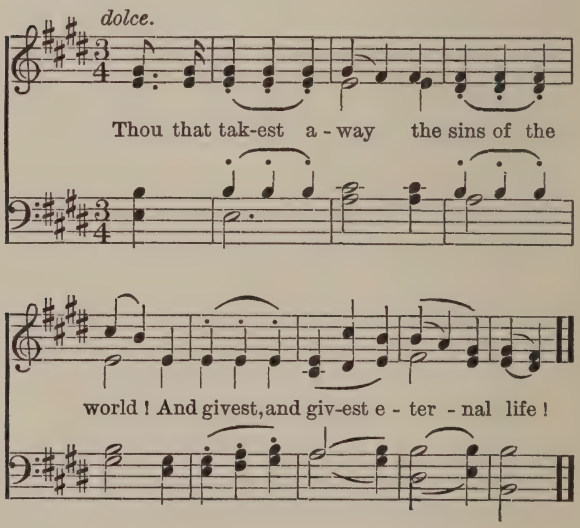
(*It can now be seen that the happy people beyond give evidence of greeting some one who is passing by them. Some weep for joy; others laugh for rapture. Some stretch their arms out as if in ecstasy. Some throw themselves on the ground in humility. Some seem to be entreating a benediction. But the figure of Him who passes by them remains invisible. The excitement now increases, and extends along the group of spirits until it reaches those in the foreground. Here can now be seen and recognized some old patients of* DR. THORNE'S — MRS. TRUE, NORAH, *and* JERRY.)

(*These wear the golden cross upon the breast.* HARVEY *enters unnoticed, and mingles with the crowd. He stands be-*

hind MRS. FAYTH, *who remains rapt and mute, full in the light. She has forgotten* DR. THORNE.)

(DR. THORNE *watches the scene with pathetic perplexity. He does not speak.*)

(*The chanting continues, and the strain swells louder.*)



(*Now the Invisible Figure makes the impression of having reached the nearer groups.*)

(NORAH *falls upon her knees.*)

(JERRY *salutes respectfully, as if he recognized a dear and honored employer whom he wished to serve and please.*)

(MRS. TRUE *reaches out her arms with reverent longing.*)

(MAIDIE *kisses her little hands to the Unseen.*)

(HARVEY *stands devoutly with bowed head.*)

(MRS. FAYTH *holds out both hands lovingly. Then she sinks to the ground upon her knees and makes the delicate motion of one who puts to her lips the edge of the robe of the Unseen Passer. Her whole expression is rapturous.*)

(LADDIE, *breaking away from his elders, now boldly steps out into the path. He looks up; shades his eyes, as if from a brilliance; then confidingly puts out his hand, as if he placed it in an Unseen Hand, and walks along, smiling like a child who is led by One whom he trusts and loves.*)

DR. THORNE (*in distress*). I see nothing! — No one! I am blind — blind!

(*Chanting.*)

"Thou that takest away
The sins of the world!" . . .

(DR. THORNE *covers his face. The music ceases. The air grows dimmer than twilight. But there is no moon, nor is it dark. The groups in the foreground move away in quiet happiness, like those who have had their heart's wish granted.*)

(HARVEY, MRS. TRUE, NORAH, JERRY, *and* MAIDIE *mingle with the other spirits.*)

(MRS. FAYTH *rises from her knees; melts slowly in the dusk.*)

(LADDIE *runs into the grove, and disappears in the gloom. He acts as if looking for some one.*)

DR. THORNE (*remains alone. He paces the grove, irresolute — then suddenly turns in the direction whence the Invisible had come; walks uncertainly up the path; searches, as if for signs of the Passer;*

examines the grass, the shrubbery; touches the flowers, to see if they had bent beneath His feet; stoops; examines the pathway reverently; speaks in a low tone). The footprint! I have found the footprint! There *was* One passing. And He stepped here. But I was blind! (*Hesitates; lifts his face to the sky; drops it to his breast; murmurs inarticulately. Then slowly — as if half his nature battled with the other half, and every fibre of his being yielded hard — he drops upon his knees. He remains silent in this posture.*)

(*From the depth of the grove behind* Dr. Thorne's *cottage,*)

Enter Cleo *stealthily.* (*She watches* Dr. Thorne *with an expression in which love, fear, reproach, and astonishment contend. She makes no sign, nor in any way is her presence revealed to* Dr. Thorne. *Taking a few steps forward, she touches the shadow of one arm of the mighty cross.* Cleo *retreats in confusion.*)

Enter The Child (*running down the path*). Papa! Papa! (*Points up the path. Beckons to his father. Points ecstatically.*) Look, look, Papa!

(Dr. Thorne *arises to his full height; looks where* The Child *points.*)

(*Slowly and solemnly,*)

Enter Jesus the Christ. (*Our Lord appears as a majestic figure, melting of outline, divine of mien, with arms outstretched in benediction.*)

(Cleo *at sight of the* Sacred Figure *wrings her hands in anguish, and makes as if she would flee; but remains gazing at the Vision, as if compelled by forces unknown to her. As the Vision draws nearer,* Cleo *drops upon her face. Her long hair covers her. All her contours blur into the increasing shadow. The scene is now quite dark, except for the light which falls from the* Person of Our Lord. *This shall fully reveal* The Man, *who falls at the feet of the Vision, and* The Child, *who stands*

entranced, with his little arms around his father's neck.)

DR. THORNE (*lifts his hands rapturously*). I *was* blind — But, now, I see! (*Accepts and remains in the attitude of worship as manfully as he had refused it.*)

(THE SACRED FIGURE *stirs, as if to meet the kneeling man; slowly dims, melts, and fades; vanishes.*)

END OF SCENE III.

SCENE IV.

In the same perspective as Scene III. is the Heavenly City on the Hill. Thronging spirits move to and fro.

The distance is full of radiance and of happy social life. In the foreground is seen a dim and desolate place. It is cavernous and mountainous. Its extreme edge yawns over a black space, like a gulf or pit, or it might be the mouth of an underground river. Here and there is a stark, dead tree. A narrow footpath winds among the crags. The path turns a sharp corner between boulders; and the fair contrast of a sunny country smiles beyond it. Rosebushes in full bloom peer above the top of the rocks. The annunci-

ation lily is still prominent among the flowers. No sign of life appears in the mountainous foreground.

Suddenly, silently, and swiftly, moving from the sunny land, around the sharp turn in the pathway, feet and face set toward the cavernous region,

Enter AZRAEL, *Angel of Death.* (*The Angel is immovable of manner. But an obvious tenderness wars with the solemnity of his expression. He looks neither to the right nor to the left, but glides over the rough path steadily; his robe, which is of dull, white gauze, conceals his feet; his wings are folded; he carries no flaming sword, nor any weapon.*)

(*After a moment's interval, following* THE ANGEL *quickly,*)

Enter DR. THORNE (*his robe is much paler, but still of a purplish tint. It is now clasped by the golden cross. He cries aloud*). Azrael!

ECHO (*from the caverns*). Azrael!

(AZRAEL *makes no reply. Moves on steadily.*)

DR. THORNE (*in a lower voice*). Azrael, Angel of Death!

(AZRAEL *turns his head, but without pausing.*)

DR. THORNE. In the name of Him who strove with thee, and conquered thee — whither goest thou, Azrael?

(AZRAEL *pauses. He looks over his folded wing at the man; regards him steadily; does not speak; moves on again.* DR. THORNE *utters an inarticulate exclamation. He follows the Angel. Halfway down the path he stops, perplexed. His expression is anxious.* AZRAEL *moves on. He does not again look back; glides to the edge of the ravine. The scene darkens. The Angel does not pause, but can be seen to cross the gulf fleetly. He does not fly, but appears to tread the air across the space.*)

[*Vanish* AZRAEL.

(DR. THORNE *stands alone in the gloom. His eyes are fixed upon the spot where the*

Angel disappeared. A low, rushing sound, as of water, can now be heard.)

DR. THORNE (*shudders; speaks*). It seems like an underground river. Horrible! (*Calls.*) Azrael! Tell me thine errand — in this fearful place!

(AZRAEL *neither replies nor appears. It grows very dark. The perspective of the Heavenly City fades. The rushing of the river can be heard. Now, through the unearthly gloom, upon the hither side of the gulf, slowly grow to form the outlines of a Woman. She stretches her arms out with the motion of one feeling her way. She moves with difficulty, tripping sometimes, but regaining her footing bravely. Her robe is light. Her face cannot be recognized.*)

DR. THORNE (*on whose sensitive countenance falls the only light in the scene, shows an unaccountable emotion. He murmurs*). It is a woman — alone — exhausted . . . and a stranger. As I serve her, so may

God send some soul of fire and snow to serve my dear wife — in *her* hour of mortal need! (*He advances towards the woman with a chivalrous sympathy.*)

(The Woman *moves on steadily; weakens; reels, but holds her ground. It can now be seen that her eyes are closed. She falls. She does not cry out.*)

Dr. Thorne. How brave you are! Keep courage. (*Catches her before she touches the ground. She lies in his arms in a faint or collapse.*)

(Dr. Thorne *carries her along midway of the scene.*)

(*It lightens slowly. As it does so, it can be seen that the woman is young and fair, and fine of nature. Her robe is of dazzling white; it has a surface like that of satin-finished gauze, which reflects all the light there is. Her long, dark hair is disordered, and falls about her. She is pale. Her eyes do not open. She lies helplessly in his arms.*)

(DR. THORNE *lays her gently against the trunk of a dead tree, which has fallen across a hollow in the cliff, and which rests so as to support the woman. He seats himself beside her; bends to examine her face.*)

DR. THORNE (*recognizes the face of the woman; cries in a voice that rings through the hills*). *Helen!*

THE ECHO (*takes up the cry*). *Helen!*

HELEN THORNE (*is half-conscious and confused; does not open her eyes; murmurs*). Will it last long?

DR. THORNE (*clasps her reverently. As his arms touch her, they can be seen to tremble. He moans*). My — poor — wife!

HELEN THORNE (*still lying with closed eyes; murmurs, but more distinctly*). I said I would die two deaths for him. . . . Are they over, yet? . . . if that would help him any . . . where he had gone. (*Opens her eyes, but they see nothing. Dreamily and solemnly, as if repeating a familiar*

prayer, she speaks softly.) Great God! I will die ten deaths for him . . . and count myself a happy woman . . . if that will make it any easier for *him.*

Dr. Thorne (*groaning, puts his wife gently from him, as if she were a being too sacred for his touch. Turns his face from her; speaks*). I am not fit! . . . I dare not touch her!

Helen Thorne (*praying*). Dear Lord! I would die for him . . . as Thou didst die for us. . . . If that could be . . . *Dear* Lord!

Dr. Thorne (*utterly broken*). I am a sinful man, O God! (*Removes from her, and stands with his face in his hands.*)

Helen Thorne (*recovering full consciousness, and with it sudden strength, lifts herself to a sitting posture; looks about her; half rises. Suddenly she recognizes her husband, where he stands aloof. She cries plaintively*). Esmerald? — Is n't it over yet? *Esmerald!* Have

you forgotten me? Don't you *care* for me any more? . . . (*piteously*). Oh, Death! I did not think that thou wouldst *crucify* me . . . *so!*

(*Sudden darkness falls. When it passes, the gulf, the dark mountain, the underground river, the ravines are gone. Slow and sweet light returns softly. It is the setting of the sun. The perspective of the Heavenly City and spirits are as before. The grim scenery surrounding the mouth of the River of Death has given place to a fair meadow, sunny and open. Some of the boulders remain, and the path which cut through the ravine now runs across the field. Clumps of trees and thick shrubs break the space between the foreground and the distant spirits, and the path turns a curve through a thicket of roses. Lilies as before grow higher than any other flowers, and nearer to the eye.*)

Helen Thorne (*stands, tall and glorious. Faint color has returned to her pale*

face. Her expression is radiant. She looks downward and stretches down her hands; speaks, very softly). Dear!

DR. THORNE (*prostrate at his wife's feet, speaks*). Forgive! *Forgive* me, Helen.

(HELEN THORNE *smiles divinely. Stoops to lift him up.*)

(DR. THORNE *resists her still, and, fallen at her feet, he draws the hem of her robe slowly to his lips. Then he lays his cheek upon her feet before he reverently kisses them.*)

DR. THORNE. I said . . . oh, I have broken my heart for what I said . . . to you!

HELEN THORNE (*reaches down her beautiful arms to him. Draws him up*). Why, my poor Love! My dear Love! Did you think I would remember *that?*

(DR. THORNE *arises. Holds out his shaking arms; does not speak.*)

(HELEN THORNE *in silence creeps to him, not royally, like a wife who was*

wronged; but like the sweetest woman in the world, who loves him because she cannot help it, and would not if she could. Her face falls upon his breast.)

(DR. THORNE, *as if she were a goddess, still not daring to caress her, lays his cheek upon her soft hair. Before her face, but not touching it, he delicately curves his hand as if he enclosed a sacred flame from the rude air.*)

HELEN THORNE (*lifts her face to his. Her eyes, all womanly, turn to him in Paradise as they did on earth. She speaks softly*). I am in Heaven . . . after all!

DR. THORNE. And I have never been there . . . until now! (*He clasps her slowly to his heart; turns her face back upon his arm and reverently looks at it; scans it adoringly; humbly crying.*) Helen! *Helen!*

(DR. THORNE *kisses his wife's brow — eyes — cheek — and then her lips. Sud-*

denly, around the curve in the path where the thicket of roses blossoms, running rapidly,)

Enter LADDIE (*carrying a stalk of the white lilies. He cries*). Papa! Papa! I 've lost you, Papa! (*The child runs down the path. Closely following him, fair and gentle, brightly smiling,*)

Enter MRS. FAYTH. (*She draws back quickly; utters an inarticulate exclamation; extends her hands in an impulsive gesture of delight. But she withdraws and puts her finger on her lips. She retreats without speaking.*)

(MRS. FAYTH, *hidden for a moment behind the thicket of roses, reappears beyond with the other spirits. The group of spirits stirs upward in the bright scenery.*)

(DR. THORNE *and* his Wife, *having seen or heard nothing, still stand rapt, embracing solemnly.*)

LADDIE (*stops on the path, irresolute.*

Frowns a little in pretty, childish perplexity; makes as if he would go back; looks at the two again. Then suddenly darts forward; cries). Why, that 's my Mamma! (*Springs to her; clutches at her white robe, pulls at her hand.*)

Helen Thorne (*recognizes the child instantly, despite his larger stature; she cries out*). Why, my little boy! Mother's baby boy! Oh! *you* again, . . . you, too! My little, little boy. (*Catches him to her; kisses him wildly; holds him, and releases him, and holds him again. Murmurs half-intelligible words brokenly.*) Mother's baby! . . . Mother's beauty! . . . Oh, mamma *missed* you, sonny-boy —

(Dr. Thorne *does not speak. His face is shining. He holds his wife within his arms as if he feared to lose her if he loosened them.*)

(The Child, *laughing softly, fondles his mother. The three stand clinging together rapturously.*)

VOICES (*from beyond the rose thicket chant*).

"As it was in the beginning, is now,
And ever shall be,
World without end. Amen."

(*Chorus of spirits from the region of the Temple on the Heavenly Hill very softly sing.*)

"O Paradise! O Paradise!
The world is growing old.
Who would not see that heavenly land,
Where love is never cold?" . . .

(*As they sing, the fair country brightens subtly, and all the heavenly scene is radiant. The moving groups of spirits seem to be joining in the song.*)

(DR. THORNE *and* his Wife, *turning, look into one another's faces. They do not speak.*)

(*Now, delicately, it shall be seen to darken on the bright land, and a holy half-light touches every outline.*)

(The Child *leaves his parents. He walks a few steps away, shading his eyes with*

one hand, as if he saw invisible glory; in the other hand he carries the annunciation lily.)

(*Vaguely at first, then more definitely; slowly and solemnly,*)

Enter JESUS THE CHRIST.

(*The* Sacred Figure *advances towards the* Man *and* Woman, *who are unconscious of the approach. Its hands are stretched in benediction. It stands for a moment, mutely, and unseen by them.*)

(The Boy *runs towards it fearlessly; seats himself upon the meadow-grass at the feet of the* Figure.)

(*The* Sacred Figure *stirs towards the child. All the light in the scene now falls from the* Figure.)

(*The* Man, *the* Woman, *and the* Child *receive its full effulgence.*)

VOICES FROM BEYOND (*sing*).

"Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light,
Enraptured through and through" —

(*The* Man *and the* Woman *now perceive the* Sacred Figure. *They fall to their knees. The man's arm still encircles his wife. They bow their heads before the Divine Presence.*)

(*The* Child, *with the lifted lily, remains at the feet of the* CHRIST.)

VOICES FROM BEYOND (*repeat*).

"Enraptured through and through,
In God's most holy sight."

(*The* Sacred Figure *dims and slowly fades. With it disappears the stalk of annunciation lilies. The light returns softly upon the celestial scenery.*)

(*The* Sacred Figure *vanishes.*)

(*The* Man, *the* Woman, *and* Child *stay gazing after it.*)

(*Now a mist breathes upon the Heavenly City and the sunny country. All the outlines of the happy scenery blur and faint.*)

(*The groups of spirits grow dim.*)

(*Distant music softly sustains the strains of the song; but without words.*)

(*And now the golden mist slowly envelops the* Man, *the* Woman, *and the* Child, *who remain for a moment before the eyes — a vision — solemn, tender, and half unreal.*)

(*The music continues very faintly. The strain slowly ceases.*)

(*The mist dulls, deepens, and thickens, till it rolls like an impenetrable curtain before the vanished scene.*)

End of the Drama.

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